

# The Academy

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## The Literary Week.

THE proposal now on foot that the Irish language should be made the vehicle of instruction in all the schools in the Irish-speaking districts of Ireland has certainly the merit of being new and astonishing. As set forth by Mr. George Moore in the *Times*, the aim of the movement is to provide a vehicle for future literature. Mr. Moore contends that the English language, burdened with 400 years of literature, has lost its freshness; and that its fate is to become the mere language of commerce, as Latin became the language of theology. The literature of the future, Mr. Moore thinks, will be written in the small languages rather than in the universal languages. This strikes us as a very dubious saying. It ignores, it seems to us, the vital connexion between literature and life. Small languages connote a small population, a restricted outlook, an over-awed polity. Can great literatures spring from such soil? Graceful, subtle literatures may, but great ones? History does not warrant that hope. Mr. Moore talks about Denmark, to whose language he credits Ibsen and Bjørnsen. Well, Ibsen and Bjørnsen have yet to be tested by time. In the case of Ireland, what ground have we for believing that the Irish language did not exhaust itself in the old Irish literature? And what probability is there that its revival will enable it to produce a fresh literature? Mr. Moore may be right about England, but we suspect he is quite wrong about Ireland. However, he has the support—the carefully qualified support—of Mr. Edmund Gosse, who says:

The language of Ireland has been blossoming there unseen like a hidden garden of roses, and, whenever the wind has blown from the west, our English poetry has felt the vague perfume of it.

But of real support of Mr. Moore there is little in Mr. Gosse's pretty letter to the *Times*.

THE first impression of Mrs. Meynell's *John Ruskin* having been exhausted, Messrs. Blackwood have issued a second edition.

PUBLICATION of a novel in England and America is, from a pecuniary point of view, good for the author. But the practice has its drawbacks, one of them being that American publishers sometimes go to press without waiting for the author's corrections. We know of one novelist who suffered in this way, and of another who, happening to turn over the pages of the American edition of his book some months after it had been published, discovered that an entire chapter had been omitted. "I suppose they were short of paper" he soliloquised. But the most flagrant case is that of the author of *Red Pottage*. The following explanatory and apologetic paragraph is from *Harper's Weekly*:

Owing to various difficulties and complications, the details of which need not be here set forth, the first American edition of Miss Cholmondeley's *Red Pottage*, which was published by the Messrs. Harper, had to be printed from proofs which the author had not revised. The demand for the novel was so prompt and so urgent that three following editions had to be printed from the

same plates as the first. In these first four American editions there were errors, which the author corrected in proof and which did not appear in any of the English editions. In the last four American editions of the book (there have been eleven in all) these errors do not appear, but unluckily the reviewers in this country dealt with the earlier American editions, and some of them have charged Miss Cholmondeley with mistakes of grammar and sense which she did not commit, but which existed in the English proofs before she revised them. The reviewers who accused Miss Cholmondeley of ignorance and disregard of syntax are invited to take notice that she was not guilty of those offences, and that they were misled by appearances due to complications of which she and her American publishers were both disconsolate, though blameless, victims.

WE offer to industrious book compilers an idea for a new anthology—"Poems by the Fathers of Poets." It would be curious; and as the fathers of poets would buy the volume, the anthology should have a wide sale. We are moved to these remarks by the publication in the *Daily Chronicle* of some lines by the Rev. Stephen Phillips, D.D., father of Mr. Stephen Phillips. They were suggested by a remark of M. Maurice de Fleury, to the effect that love is a malady of the mind, to be classed among the most distressing of the diseases:

Of love, life's balm, by heavenly instinct led,  
'Tis true our Shakespeare's peerless wit hath said,  
It is an ill that harmeth heart and head;

Nay, up-to-date authorities on nerve  
Declare it but a poison that may serve  
Briefly to end the bliss we would preserve;

Still, like Orlando and all lovers sure,  
Though French physician find its certain cure,  
We say, Ah, let us yet such ill endure!

FROM "Latest Wills": Robert Alan Mowbray Stevenson, 41, Oxford-road, Chiswick, art critic of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, painter, and Roscoe Professor of Fine Arts, Liverpool University College, 1887-93. Sole executrix—Mrs. H. L. Stevenson, the widow. £7,117.

THE title of one of Mr. George Allen's new books, announced for the autumn, does not strike us as being felicitous. To whom would one give it? and, when given, imagine the feelings of the child seeing the title every day. The book is called *The Dull Child's Grammar*.

To the *Review of the Week* of last Saturday Mr. Thomas Hardy contributed a little poem which his admirers will like to note. It is called "To Sincerity." There are six stanzas, of which the first, and last two, are as follows:

O shunned Sincerity! . . .  
Where modern methods be,  
What scope for thine and thee?

—Yet, would men look for true things,  
And questioningly view things,  
And count to bear undue things.

The real might mend the seeming,  
The fact the dread foredeeming,  
And Life its disesteeming.

It is difficult to reconcile the proceedings of the Boxers with the character of the Chinese, as revealed in their songs. "Through most of these," says Prof. Douglas, a distinguished authority, "there breathes a quiet calm, a spirit of peaceful repose, of family love, and of religious feeling." Below is a specimen, taken from *The Book of Odes*, compiled by Confucius. It might be called "The Lazy Husband and the Dutiful Wife":

"Get up, husband. Here's the day!"  
 "Not yet, wife, the dawn's still grey!"  
 "Get up, sir, and on the right  
 See the morning star shines bright.  
 Shake off slumber, and prepare  
 Ducks and geese to shoot and snare.

All our darts, and line to kill,  
 I will dress for you with skill;  
 Thus a blithesome hour we'll pass,  
 Brightened by a cheerful glass;  
 While your lute its aid imparts,  
 To justify and soothe our hearts.

On all whom you may wish to know,  
 I'll girdle ornaments bestow;  
 And girdle ornaments I'll send  
 To anyone who calls you friend;  
 With them whose love for you's abiding,  
 My girdle ornaments dividing."

Most Chinese songs are in the same key. The epic is conspicuously lacking from Chinese poetry. But there is one exception—the prayer alleged to have been uttered by King Suen during the great drought of the eighth century. Some of the lines are very vigorous and forceful:

The Monarch cried, "Alas!  
 What crime is ours that Heaven thus sends on us  
 Death and Disorder, that with blow on blow,  
 Famine attacks us?  
 Surely I have grudged  
 To God no victims; all our store is spent of tokens—  
 Why is it I am not heard?  
 Rages the drought. The hills are parched, and dry  
 The streams. The demon of the drought  
 Destroys like one who scatters fiery flames.  
 Terrified by the burning heat, my heart,  
 My mourning heart, seems all consumed with fire,  
 The many dukes and ministers of the past,  
 Pay no heed."

The reference to the "many dukes and ministers of the past" means, of course, that prayers to ancestors had been in vain.

SINCE our paragraph on Mr. Pearson and "The Yellow Peril" appeared, several writers have made references to the subject, but none of them, somewhat suspiciously, go deeper than the author of our note. Thus not merely did Mr. Pearson opine that the Chinese would dominate the world, but he conjectured that we should sink to their level, morally and intellectually, a view also once expressed by Mr. Mill. Thus to quote from *National Life and Character*, which none of the many writers who have recently referred to it, save ourselves, have done:

Ultimately he [the European] will have to conform to the Oriental standard of existence, or—and this is the probable solution—to stint the increase of population. If he does this by methods that are inconsistent with morality, the very life-springs of the race will be tainted. If he does it by a patient self-restraint that shows itself in a limitation to late marriages, national character will be unimpaired, but material decline will be commenced. With civilisation equally diffused, the most populous country must ultimately be the most powerful; and the preponderance of China over any rival—even over the United States of America—is likely to be overwhelming. . . . Let us conceive the leading European nations to be stationary, while the Black and Yellow Belt, including China, Malaysia, India, Central Africa, and Tropical America, is all teeming with life developed by industrial enterprise, fairly well administered by native governments, and owning the

better part of the carrying trade of the world. Can anyone suppose that, in such a condition of political society, the habitual temper of mind in Europe would not be profoundly changed? Depression, hopelessness, a disregard of invention and improvement, would replace the sanguine confidence of races that, at present, are always panting for new worlds to conquer.

MESSRS. SOTHEBY began on Wednesday a four days' book sale of considerable interest. The books are gathered from many sources, and there is a rather pathetic suggestiveness about the divisional headings, which include:

The Property of a Nobleman.  
 The Property of a Gentleman.  
 The Property of a Lady.  
 The Property of a Baronet.  
 The Property of a Clergyman.  
 Another Property.  
 Other Properties.

Many of the books and MSS. are of special interest, and the general run of books is good. We note the following entry:

STEVENSON (ROBERT LOUIS), THE BODY SNATCHER, ORIGINAL AUTOGRAPH MS., 17 folio pages 1884  
 The original MS. of this remarkable story, which appeared in the Christmas number of the *Pall Mall Gazette* for 1884, with the number of the magazine in which it first appeared; press notices of the story, the last portrait of R. L. Stevenson, a trial plate, and a proof of the design by Mat. Morgan.

An autograph letter of Byron's, written to John Hunt, from Genoa, March 17, 1823, is interesting. Byron writes about public disapproval of his works. He adds:

Every publication of mine has latterly failed. I am not discouraged by this, because writing and composition are habits of my mind with which Success and Publication are objects of remotest reference—not causes, but effects, like those of any other pursuit. I have enough of both of praise and abuse to deprive them of their novelty, but I continue to compose for the same reason that I ride, or read, or bathe, or travel—it is a habit. I want sadly *Peveil of the Peak*, which has not yet arrived here, and I will thank you much for a copy; I shall direct Mr. Kinnaid to reimburse you for the price.

A letter of Shelley's, dated from Marlow in 1817, contains the sentence:

I published sometime since a Poem called *Alastor* at Baldwin's; the sale, I believe, was scarcely anything.

A quatrain in the handwriting of the Duke of Reichstadt, the unfortunate son of Napoleon I., and the hero of M. Rostand's "L'Aiglon," is also offered, and runs as follows:

Heureux qui met en Dieu toute son espérance,  
 On a toujours besoin d'explorer sa bonté;  
 Il nous consolera dans les jours de souffrance  
 Si nous l'avons servi dans prospérité.

FRANÇOIS.

WHAT we may call the dynamite criticism of Shakespeare goes on merrily. Not only has Mr. Donnelly been busy again, but at least two other American commentators have put forward explosive theories. Mr. Charles Allen, of the Supreme Court of Massachusetts, assails the Baconian theory, but substitutes one not much more acceptable—viz., that Shakespeare collaborated to a greater extent than is realised with other dramatists. "If such collaboration is established on the part of the writer of any of the Shakespearean plays, it makes against the Baconian theory of authorship. It is not likely that Bacon would unite with any of the ordinary playwrights in the production of plays." So that to save Shakespeare from Bacon, Mr. Allen throws him into the sea of dramatic authorship, and allows his genius to mingle with the general waters. This is not inspiring:



THE second critic is a Mr. W. H. Edwards, who has written a book entitled *Shaksper, not Shakespeare*, the argument of which may be gathered from the following passages:

In the pages to follow, I assert and prove that the Shakespeare plays were not written for William Shaksper's Theatre, and that no one of them was ever played at his theatre, except in special scenes or in pantomime; and also that no man during his lifetime attributed the plays to William Shaksper, or suspected him of any authorship whatever. I assert and prove that until the issue of the First Folio of the Collected Plays in 1623, years after the death of William Shaksper, these plays, singly or collectively, had no reputation whatever.

Mr. Edwards then sketches Shakespeare's life, and, coming to his name, says:

The name Shakespeare is quite another etymologically and orthographically from Shagsper, or Shaksper, or Shaksper, or Shaxpeyr, or Shackyspere, or Shaxper. It is not in evidence that any author lived in the age of Elizabeth whose family and baptismal name was William Shakespeare, or Shake-speare. There is no such historical man—no individual known who bore that name—and the inference is fair that the name as printed upon certain poems and plays was a pseudonym, like that of "Mark Twain" or of "George Eliot."

Mr. Edwards scouts the idea that a man of Shakespeare's bringing up could have a command of languages and of court life. Who, then, wrote the Plays? More dynamite is brought forward. If Shakespeare cannot be embodied in Bacon at least he can be blown to fragments and his genius divided among a crowd.

It would seem, then, to humbler individuals that possibly either one of the writers named and some score others might have worked on the Shakespeare plays without violence to probability. I would suggest that searchlights be turned on the judicious Hooker, or the worthy Donne, or the learned Coke, or Tobie Matthew, or Lord Burleigh himself . . . or the many acknowledged playwrights of that age, university men, who wrote singly or in collaboration—Daniel, Marlowe, Greene, and the rest.

At this rate Shakespeare described his plays when he described Petruchio's attire: "A new hat and an old jerkin; a pair of old breeches thrice turned; a pair of boots that have been candle-cases, one buckled, another laced . . . his horse tripped with an old mothy saddle and stirrups of no kindred," &c. But, for our part, we prefer to think that Shakespeare addresses his critics in Petruchio's words: "Look, what I speak, or do, or think to do, You are still crossing it. Sirs, let 't alone."

In a second article on Prof. Bury's *Gibbon*, in the *Pilot*, Dr. Hodgkin touches on Gibbon's attitude to Christianity. He considers that Gibbon was "a non-religious man," who had no spiritual experience of his own.

It may be true, as Lord Byron says, that the effect of his writings was "to sap a solemn creed with solemn sneer," but I doubt whether he was sufficiently in earnest, even in his unbelief, to have consciously set this aim before him. The one quality which provokes his utter scorn and antagonism is "bigotry," and, curiously enough, he finds traces of this abhorred passion of the soul in Voltaire himself. No; Gibbon did not, I think, specially hate Christianity, but he disliked in his languid, superior way, all appearance of religious earnestness in Jew or Gentile. As a matter of curious speculation he was willing to devote a good deal of time and thought to Christian theology (his account of the heresies and orthodoxies of the fourth or fifth centuries is still, perhaps, one of the best that has been written), but the whole thing was utterly outside of him. Religion met no want in his heart, touched no lever in his soul. He was essentially a child of "the polite society" of the eighteenth century, a society which believed in itself and in not much beside, a society which secretly thought that God would never be severe with persons of such high quality.

MR. HENLEY now connects South Africa with whatever literature he is dealing with. His "Ex Libris" in the August *Pall Mall Magazine* begins: "At the time of writing, Lord Roberts has entered Pretoria, the braves on Laing's Nek are like a nut in a pair of crackers, what was the Orange Free State is British territory, and Mr. Ernest Coleridge has published his excellently edited third volume of the *Poetry of Byron*." Next month Mr. Henley will hardly arrive at his point so quickly, for there will be events in China to recite in addition. Mr. Henley is the Ulysses of criticism; he will not settle down, but is ever bent on adventure and big effects. To defend Byron he hacks his way through poets, who, left to themselves, would have stood aside and perhaps have applauded his design. But they all bleed to make a Henley holiday. This is the kind of thing:

And Kaled, Gulnare, Zuleika, Julia, Haidée, are they so very much less interesting, do they touch us so very much less instantly, are they so very much more remote from reality, than "faintly smiling Adeline" and these other Tennysonian beauties? And the May Queen—with her Robin and those "garden tools," and that "Traviata cough" of hers—are we really to take her to our bosoms now—even now!—before that thrice excellent Aurora Raby and our "frolic grace Fitz-Fulke," who have so much to do with the gaiety and the supremacy of the last cantos of *Don Juan*?

I trow not; for these shams signed "Tennyson" are already dead, and not dead only, but damned—damned to the infernal deeps—"With Erebus and tortures vile also."

The next poet to cumber the battlefield is "that mass of half-inspired, half-realised, half-uttered, and wholly perfunctory and futile gabble which—some noble passages apart—is Browning." The next to fall is Rossetti. The last is Shelley, and then there is a gory roll-call:

In truth, Mr. Coleridge is fully justified in remarking that Byron's poetry "holds its own." Does Shelley's? I wonder! some lyrics apart, I wonder! Has *The Cenci* never been found out? do people still find sustenance in *The Revolt of Islam*, and "The Witch of Atlas," and "Rosalind and Helen," and "The Sensitive Plant," and *Alastor*? Were these ever anything to anybody? "I'll not believe it." Or, if they were, in the days of their birth, are they anything to anybody now, after fourscore years and a surfeit of Tennyson and Browning and Rossetti? Probably, of all the poets who ennobled and delighted the earlier days of this dying century, the best read and the best loved is Keats; though Coleridge, the "universal inspiration" as I've called him elsewhere, stands far higher than he did in his own day; and Wordsworth, whose philosophy appears on the whole to have served its turn, is still read largely for that philosophy, and now and then for his divagations—(God knows how or why!)—into high poetry. On the whole, it looks as though Matthew Arnold had but grasped half the truth when he said that Byron and Wordsworth would head the procession of Nineteenth Century English poets into the "mist and hum" of the Twentieth Century. It may be Shelley and Byron; it may be Byron and Keats; it may be Byron and Coleridge. But, whoever the one, the other will certainly be Byron.

So many books have been held over by publishers that, in spite of the complications in China, the autumn season promises to be a very full one. The following novels may be expected:

*The Soft Side.* Henry James.  
*In the Palace of the King.* Marion Crawford.  
*Quisante.* Anthony Hope.  
*Richard Yea and Nay.* Maurice Hewlett.  
*Cunning Murrell.* Arthur Morrison.  
*A Master of Craft.* W. W. Jacobs.  
*Sons of the Morning.* Eden Phillpotts.  
*The Gateless Barrier.* Lucas Malet.  
*Zuleika Hobson.* Max Beerbohm.

WHEN awarding prizes at the Blackheath School last Saturday, Mr. Birrell talked as amusingly as could be expected, having regard to the fact that he was introduced by the head master as "a modern Macaulay." Fancy trying to "birrell" after that! He said, among other things (we quote the *Daily News* report):

He could not remember in his schooldays ever getting a prize, but he often witnessed other boys getting them, and though he may have envied them the distinction, he did not envy them the books they carried away. Having kept up his acquaintance in after life with many of those heroes, who now inhabited comfortable homes of their own, he often inquired what had become of those school-prizes, but they were seldom forthcoming. The prizes, however, just distributed, with one lamentable exception—a book that he himself, in a misguided moment, wrote [*Obiter Dicta*—were admirable and interesting works, taste having improved; and publishers become more enterprising.

WE are to have a biography of Count Tolstoi—necessarily a *memoir pour servir*—by Mr. Hagbert Wright. Mr. Wright is the energetic librarian of the London Library. He hopes to visit Tolstoi in his home this summer.

HAVE editors their "fancies" in typewriting? Failing style in an article, do they succumb to style in its presentation? We have not detected such susceptibilities in our own breast, but we note the following advertisement in a literary paper:

MSS. copied, from 10d. per 1,000 words, in a new and effective style, which gives the MS. a special chance.

## Bibliographical.

THERE is great activity among the biographers. We are to have, for example, brand-new memoirs of Cardinal Richelieu, Gilbert White of Selborne, and Richard Wagner; and all will be welcome. Of Richelieu there is no exhaustive, or even substantial, English life in circulation. The only obtainable memoirs are that which appeared in the "Foreign Statesmen" series four years ago, and that which M. Gustave Masson wrote for the S.P.C.K. in 1884. Most English people of to-day have derived their ideas about Richelieu from Lord Lytton's play, from the dramas dealing with d'Artagnan, or from *Under the Red Robe*. Of Gilbert White the published biographical details have been few; and of late years they have usually been repeated, with variations, by editors of *The Natural History of Selborne*, from Buckland to Grant Allen. Among those editors, one remembers, were Richard Jefferies (1887) and John Burroughs (1895). Concerning Wagner there is already existent in English a good deal of biographical material. There are, for example, the memoir by F. Hueffer in the "Great Musicians" series (1883), and F. Praeger's *Wagner as I Knew Him* (1892); there are also the English translations of the monographs by F. Muncker (1891) and H. S. Chamberlain (1897). Add to these the Wagner-Liszt Correspondence, published in English in 1888, and the letters to Dresden friends, to Roeckl, to Wesendonck, and to Heckel, issued respectively in 1890, 1897, and 1899, and you have a mass of Wagner literature from which a very large measure of biographical data could be extracted without the aid of any new biographer.

The publication of Tennyson's "Princess," arranged as a drama by a certain L. Rossi, recalls the fact that the poem has already been the basis of two dramatic productions, both from the pen of Mr. W. S. Gilbert. L. Rossi has taken Tennyson's lines and used as many of them as possible. Mr. Gilbert, in the first place, made the poem the foundation of a blank-verse extravaganza, likewise entitled "The Princess," and described by the author as "a whimsical allegory," "a respectful perversion of Mr.

Tennyson's poem." This was in 1870, in which year the "perversion" was performed at the Olympic Theatre, London. If I remember rightly, it was not a very great success. On the other hand, when Mr. Gilbert, some fourteen years later, fitted his "perversion" with choruses and other lyric interludes, called it "Princess Ida," and got Sir Arthur Sullivan to write the necessary music, the result was triumph. "Princess Ida" is not one of the best known of the Gilbert-Sullivan operas, but it has done much to popularise (though in the vein of caricature) the creation of the poet. L. Rossi's "Princess" seems to have been performed in private. I should tremble for it in public.

Talking of L. Rossi, I protest, as a bibliographer, against the adoption of a signature so unsatisfactory. What does the "L" import? Is it the initial of a masculine or of a female name? Authors are rather inconsiderate in this direction. They often give no clue not only to sex but to "condition." Is L. Rossi, if a woman, "Miss" or "Mrs."? (*Miss or Mrs.*? by the way, is the title of one of Wilkie Collins's "problem" stories.) I was glad, the other day, to see the author of a book on Hampstead and its associations setting a good example in this respect. She proclaimed herself quite clearly on the title-page as "Mrs. Caroline A. White." What a relief to the reviewer, who is so tired of writing about an author as "Miss (or Mrs.)"!

We are promised a sequel to Mr. Bellamy's *Looking Back*, to be entitled *My After-Dream*, and, of course, not the work of Mr. Bellamy. Sequels not written by the authors of the original productions are not, if my memory serves me, very common in the literary world. One sees more of that sort of thing in matters of the stage—Tom Taylor's "Our American Cousin" being followed by Oxenford's "Sam's Arrival" and H. J. Byron's "Lord Dundreary Married and Done For," Taylor's "Ticket of Leave Man" by Cheltenham's "Ticket of Leave Man's Wife," and Lytton's "Lady of Lyons" by Merivale's "Lady of Lyons Married and Settled"—to name no others. In the realm of fiction, however, the original writer has generally done his own sequels, and it is the safer plan. It is not everyone who can bend the bow of Apollo. William Brough wrote a piece into which he introduced a Lord Dundreary from whom, he pretended, Taylor's Lord Dundreary had descended. That was a bit of audacity to which, I think, and hope, the history of pure literature affords no parallel.

Close upon the paragraphs in which, the other day, I gave some particulars concerning the recent vogue of Ben Jonson, comes the announcement that a couple of scholars contemplate the publication of an annotated edition of his works, in which special attention will be paid to the classic originals of many of the poet-dramatist's lines. Is it possible that Jonson can have, at this time of day, any admirers so seriously devoted to him? I venture to think that as a dramatist he is dead. To an annotated edition of his lyric poems there would, of course, be no objection, though even that seems scarcely worth while.

In the four-page Introduction which Mr. Watts-Dunton has written for the sixpenny edition of his *Aylwin*, he will explain why it was that he delayed the publication of that work even after the decease of those who might be thought to be delineated in it. "It was simply diffidence," says Mr. Watts-Dunton; "in other words, it was that infirmity which, though generally supposed to belong to youth, comes to a writer, if it comes at all, with years." It was the success of *The Coming of Love*, with its large gypsy element, which decided the fate of *Aylwin*, inducing its author to give it to the world. To certain correspondents Mr. Watts-Dunton, through this Introduction, makes it known that the Sinfu Lovell of his prefatory notes to *Lavengro* is the Sinfu Lovell of *Aylwin*, and that the Rhona Boswell of *Aylwin* is the Rhona Boswell of *The Coming of Love*.

THE BOOKWORM.



## Reviews.

## Beatific Pot-boilers.

*Essays of John Dryden.* Selected and Edited by W. P. Ker, M.A. (Clarendon Press. 2 vols. 10s. 6d.)

THESE essays, which Prof. Walter Ker has had the excellent idea of issuing in a detached form, are the critical prefaces to Dryden's various publications, excluding such as were purely dedicatory. Here we have two volumes of pot-boilers flagrant, unashamed, with little reason, indeed, for shame, since they have survived—and gloriously survived—near two centuries.

Read all the prefaces of Dryden,  
For them the critics much confide in;  
Though only writ at first for filling,  
To raise the volume's price a shilling.

Byron's doggerel happily memorises a fact. Dryden, when he threw off these prefaces to gratify the demands of "the trade," had small thought of writing masterpieces, small thought that he was marking an epoch in English prose. Yet this he did. And he did it by arrant pot-boiling.

O that the present hour would lend  
One more pot-boiler of the kind!  
Such "padding" as his we should not mind!

Byron may pardon the outrage for its appropriateness. These essays (as Prof. Ker not untruly styles them) are a monumental proof that the man of parts can gild his literary chains; that it is cowardly to say: "I wrote badly because I wrote, not of my own impulse, but for pay"; that the pot-boiler may at least be a thing of veritable merit, if not of transcendent merit. Granted that, without blame, even a man of parts might fail to wear his chains like "Glorious John"—"Glorious John," who could have made a decent poem out of *Bradshaw's Guide*. Yet do these beatific pot-boilers come as a seasonable rebuke to the slovenly work which overflows the modern press, often the work of men who could do better things, were their literary conscience not hardened as the soles of a street-Arab.

Yet further are they a rebuke, and at the same time a wholesome antidote, to the prevalent poverty of slipshod style. We do not speak of the few who write solely for literary fame: their disease is quite other—a too meticulous anxiety of expression, though not often of structure. We speak of the virtual or avowed pot-boiler, of what goes by the generic name of journalistic style—the style of those who must needs write *currente calamo*, with indeliberate pen. One knows this general style. With the more expert it consists in successive sentences of almost infantile brevity, turning the flank of structural difficulty—the chopped sausage-meat of composition, Macaulay done to rags. With the less expert it is a diffuse, weak-minded sentence, a labefaction of all structure, relatives wandering aimless, distressedly looking for their connexions, with an unhappy sense that the search is hopeless; there is no attempt at clause, but instead the nearest the writer can go to organism is to take several short sentences, put them end to end, and knock the heads out of them. Dryden is an admirable example for the reformation of both these kinds. He stands midway between the two. His sentences are not mere short yaps, like an excited cur. Nor yet has he the formal, *periodic* structure of Johnson, or the still somewhat formal though looser structure of Swift. A formal structure would be useless for informal writing. Succeeding to the stately writers of the seventeenth century, yet obliged by circumstances and his own temper to write fluently, he hits on a happy compromise. His sentences are direct, with a certain felicitous laxity of construction, which rids them of all pedantry, any air of deliberation; yet he dexterously avoids the dissolution of structure,

and keeps them well in rein, for all the easy bravery of their pace. At the same time, there is throughout the vigorous straightness, the idiomatic, vernacular turn, fresh from and smelling of the soil, which eminently suited his genius, and must have been a joy to himself, as it is to the reader. All these characters make it an admirable influence for the reformation of modern journalistic style, in either extreme of its slovenly effete. Above all, Dryden is not effete. He is brimming with virility, his style is full of fight. Yet it has no taint of the vulgarity, the *rowdiness*, of what now too often passes for "vigorous English." A phrase here, of course, a construction there, a word or so elsewhere, is obsolete; but these are casual, easily eliminated.

Of his staid narrative style, a little more calculated than the thorough Drydenian writing when his blood is up, there is an excellent specimen in the opening of *The Essay on Dramatic Poesy*. It has, moreover, a peculiar interest; for it is an admirable little cabinet picture of a striking historical episode as it was realised by the Londoner of that day. Not often, in those impersonal times, are we given a glimpse of events as they came home to the man in the street; but here we are allowed, for a single moment, to see London in a war experience with almost the intimacy of the present day. It concerns a battle off the English coast between the Dutch fleet and the English led by the Duke of York. We insert the proper names, instead of the fictitious ones given by Dryden:

It was that memorable day, in the first summer of the late war, when our navy engaged the Dutch—a day wherein the two most mighty and best appointed fleets which any age had ever seen disputed the command of the greater half of the globe, the commerce of nations, and the riches of the universe. While these vast floating bodies, on either side, moved against each other in parallel lines, and our countrymen, under the happy conduct of His Royal Highness, went breaking, little by little, into the line of the enemies, the noise of the cannon from both navies reached our ears about the city, so that all men, being alarmed with it, and in a dreadful suspense of the event which we knew was then deciding, every one went following the sound as his fancy led him; and, leaving the town almost empty, some took towards the park, some cross the river, others down it—all seeking the noise in the depth of silence.

Among the rest it was the fortune of Lord Buckhurst, Sir Robert Howard, Sir Charles Sedley, and Mr. Dryden to be in company together. . . . Taking, then, a barge which a servant of Sir Charles Sedley had provided for them, they made haste to shoot the bridge, and left behind them the great fall of waters which hindered them from hearing what they desired; after which, having disengaged themselves from many vessels which rode at anchor in the Thames, and almost blocked up the passage towards Greenwich, they ordered the watermen to let fall their oars more gently; and then, every one favouring his own curiosity with a strict silence, it was not long ere they perceived the air to break about them like the noise of distant thunder, or of swallows in a chimney: those little undulations of sound, though almost vanishing before they reached them, yet still seeming to retain somewhat of their first horror, which they had betwixt the fleets. After they had attentively listened till such time as the sound by little and little went from them, Lord Buckhurst, lifting up his head, and taking notice of it, was the first who congratulated to the rest that happy omen of our nation's victory, adding that we had but this to desire in confirmation of it, that we might hear no more of that noise which was now leaving the English coast.

Buckhurst's wish (or Dryden's in Buckhurst's mouth) has been fulfilled. For near two centuries London city has never again sat solitary, while its citizens flocked Greenwich-ward to harken anxiously that sound as of "swallows in a chimney"—the thunder of an enemy's guns. Is the time at hand when the scene described with such life-like touches may be renewed? Anyway, a more taking introduction to an essay was never contrived.

But this is not, as we have said, Dryden's more current style. Of that a quite average conception may be formed from the following passage in the *Examen Poeticum*, where he is treating the proper manner of translation:

Mr. Chapman, in his translation of Homer, professes to have done it somewhat paraphrastically, and that on set purpose; his opinion being, that a good poet is to be translated in that manner. I remember not the reason which he gives for it; but I suppose it is for fear of omitting any of his excellencies. Sure I am, that if it be a fault, 'tis much more pardonable than that of those who run into the other extreme of a literal and close translation, where the poet is confined so straitly to his author's words that he wants elbow-room to express his elegancies. He leaves him obscure; he leaves him prose, where he found him verse; and no better than thus has Ovid been served by the so-much-admired Sandys. . . . But this proceeded from the wrong judgment of the age in which he lived. They neither knew good verse nor loved it; they were scholars, 'tis true, but they were pedants; and for a just reward of their pedantic pains all their translations want to be translated into English.

We may demur to that illiberal judgment on an age which produced better translations than anything the eighteenth century has given us; though Sandys, truly, was a poor specimen. But the easy directness of the style, the inartificial variety of short and long sentences; the well-knit structure, diversified with a certain agreeable laxity; the strong, clear vernacular, the English backbone of it all; these things are not only excellent in themselves, but most imitable at the present day. Here, again, is a typical specimen of his most forceful and happy manner; which has the further advantage of containing a judicious and judicial criticism on a point which still affords matter for heated and by no means always judicious discussion. It is from the *Dedication of the Aeneis*:

I will not excuse, but justify, myself for one pretended crime with which I am liable to be charged by false critics . . . that I Latinise too much. 'Tis true that when I find an English word significant and sounding, I neither borrow from the Latin nor any other language; but when I want at home, I must seek abroad.

If sounding words are not of our growth, who shall hinder me to import them from a foreign country? I carry not out the treasure of the nation, which is never to return; but what I bring from Italy I spend in England: here it remains and here it circulates; for if the coin be good, it will pass from one hand to another. I trade both with the living and the dead, for the enrichment of our native language. We have enough in England to supply our necessity; but if we will have things of magnificence and splendour, we must get them by commerce. Poetry requires ornament, and that is not to be had from our old Teuton monosyllables; therefore, if I find any elegant word in a classic author, I propose it to be naturalised by using it myself; and, if the public approves of it, the bill passes. But every man cannot distinguish between pedantry and poetry: every man, therefore, is not fit to innovate. Upon the whole matter a poet must first be certain that the word he would introduce is beautiful in the Latin, and is to consider, in the next place, whether it will agree with the English idiom. After this, he ought to take the opinion of judicious friends, such as are learned in both languages. And, lastly, since no man is infallible, let him use this licence very sparingly; for if too many foreign words are poured in upon us, it looks as if they were designed, not to assist the natives, but to conquer them.

This is Dryden's criticism at its best; sound, sensible judgment, unentangled by questions of principle, wherein he shows weak. It leaves little to be said on the matter. One notes a characteristic feature of his argumentative style—a certain lively cut-and-thrust manner, sometimes animated by interrogation, which recalls a forcible debater. Such a style is liable to be too unexceptional, to slur nice considerations: here and there one might demand a modification of some statement too sweeping. He slips sometimes in strict grammar: "every man is not fit to

innovate" were better "not every man is fit to innovate," for it means structurally other than he intends. You will note his happiness of homely illustration: Swift himself scarce betters it, though he be more fecund in it. What joy were it if many modern *critiques* were as sane in decision, as hardy and clean in style!

The editing is excellently done. Of course, having once decided what class of preface to exclude, the task with regard to the remainder became mainly a mechanical one. Yet some matters remain for an editor's decision, even in a reprint. Should he adopt the text of Dryden's first or Dryden's latest edition? In this case Prof. Ker seems to us to have made an unfortunate choice. He elects to follow the first editions, on the ground that the text of the later editions is already accessible in other forms, while that of the first editions is not. But is there any reason why readers should hunger after the first edition texts? Dryden's corrections were, as Prof. Ker says, mainly grammatical. He might have added that Dryden (as might be expected from a man who all his life was improving his *technique*) showed sound judgment in these mostly grammatical corrections. It is surely a curious standard of editorship which reprints an inferior text in preference to a better and later text (corrected, too, by the ripe judgment of the author himself), merely because no other editor has done it—as why on earth should he? Moreover, this is the only separate reprint of Dryden's prose in general—apart from his total works—and the more reason, therefore, why the text should be the best available. Prof. Ker has seemingly been bitten by the modern mania to reprint non-valuable things solely because they are inaccessible—and would they remained so! On the other hand, his judgment in using modern spelling seems well supported by the reasons he advances. Above all, we owe him gratitude for the admirable critical analysis of Dryden's prose—both general and particular—with which he prefaces these volumes.

## Two Country Books.

*Seven Gardens and a Palace.* By E. V. B. (Lane.)

*The Birds of My Parish.* By Evelyn H. Pollard. (Lane.)

UNLIKE in other respects, these books resemble one another in being beautifully printed and illustrated. Miss (or is it Mrs?) Pollard keeps to her text and writes of nothing but birds. "E. V. B."—since this is how the Hon. Mrs. Boyle likes to be known—ranges far and wide. Nominally, her book is about various homes she has had—"Dropmore," for example, in South Bucks, built by Lord Grenville about 1792. Lady Grenville had a passion for the wild-brier rose, and now the bushes she planted come up all wild about the place in natural and beautiful disorder, in contrast with the stateliness of the famous gardens. "Huntercombe," now "an old house full of echoes," was once part of the ancient priory of Burnham—a broken sword (once swayed by a cavalier) in the hall, a ruin without, a fish-stew, an oak scrub, a willow garth, and much of old legend and new story—material surely made to the hand for "E. V. B."! How easy to imagine "the long-past summer morning, when through the wide glass doors opening upon the garden right across the dewy lawn one could see the low-branched elms in the meadow by the pond where the cows were grazing." Then there is "Maryculter," in far-away Aberdeenshire, with its grey stables and tales going back to 1127, when the Templars had a manor of 8,000 acres. Ellon Castle, its sundial of James the Second's day, its view of the lovely peak of Bonnachie, old yews, shaded alleys—it, like the rest, has a clothing of romance. So by degrees we come to Hampton Court. Nowhere is the authoress one little bit of the mere enthusiast or fad-ridden gardener. She has sympathy, imagination, poetry,



a full mind. Perhaps her one great fault is a tendency to indulge in sentiment, and, at unguarded moments, to fall into a style patented by Ouida: "The palm-gardens of Bordighera where periwinkles—*fiori dei morti*—rain down their blue from the overflowing laps of ancient palms, or wander in smiles about the rugged roots." A whole chapter is written in a style of which this is a favourable example. We like "E. V. B." best without stilts, as in the following extract. A critic second to none has said you can always tell a true lover of nature when he or she begins to write about the wind. There are things that almost write themselves—the slender young moon like white ivory, stars reflected from still water, reeds, bulrushes, lilies, foliage, flowers, hayland, and cornland, but you must really know and feel to write thus of the wind:

The "sorry wind" is singing now. A little of the sorry wind goes a long way; and even in my new garden-room, with the wide delightful window of leaded panes—made to catch the full south pouring in great floods of light—I do not care to listen. The sorry wind in a solitary evening singing, chanting, reciting all the time, is most melancholy. What it says I am never sure of; but I know that in the music of the sorry wind is never heard aught but a strain of hopeless sorrow. . . . If pathos be, as has been said, the "sense of loss and longing mingled with melancholy," then the sorry wind is surely pathos itself. It is the saddest sound in the world to listen to.

The ring of sincerity is there as if heard in a speaker's voice. We hasten to add that the mournfulness of this passage is not at all characteristic of the book. Mrs. Boyle, as a rule, writes cheerfully, though one regrets that the presence of pen and paper seems to repress her acute sense of fun, which is but indicated in a few passages such as the following:

Half the world knows no more about their neighbours the rooks than the old Scotch farmer, who, on the occasion of a village meeting, when the lecturer proposed to read a paper about rooks, remarked, "What can he have to say about the crow? It's just a bird that eats tattie."

This of Maryculter churchyard: "It was the old man that does the mowing who meditatively remarked to us one day—leaning, like old Time, upon his scythe: 'It is a verra solemn place' (I wish he had not added—'seems summat to look at when it's cleaned up')." There is, again, the story of the gentleman's butler who passed stolid and unimpressed through all the fairest scenes of the Continent till he came to the giant cork trees at Madrid, the sight of which woke the enthusiasm of his butler's mind. But "E. V. B." has been too sparing of this playful element in her nature, and we could have wished that her pages had been more freely adorned with passages of a similar kind. There are, however, many human touches equally interesting. For example, take this portrait of her grandmother, Lady Albinia Cumberland, daughter of George, third Earl of Buckingham, who died, at ninety-two years of age, in 1852. She had been one of Queen Charlotte's ladies and a great beauty in her youth, as her portrait by Romney remains to testify. But here is the figure she cut at Hampton Court in her old age:

A little old woman, rather bent, yet with slow and stately gait. Her train of soft black modesilk she held up at the back as she walked. A white kerchief, and a black lace veil arranged over her close round cap, completed the picturesque toilette. Bonnet she never wore excepting on Sundays for service in the chapel. At chapel, Lady A. (she was always "Lady A." to her family and friends) sat upstairs in the Royal Closet or enclosed gallery, then the exclusive right of present or former members of the household. Here she made a point of beguiling the hour of service with the peculiar chronic long-drawn cough in which she indulged to the exasperation of the whole congregation. Vainly they threatened to bring her before the Board of Green Cloth—the Star Chamber of Hampton Court—Lady A.'s cough was indomitable.

But, after all, these passages only illustrate the subsidiary features of "E. V. B.'s" merits as a writer—her

main attraction lies in the expression of that charm of the garden which she puts with an intensity unique among her contemporaries, though easily paralleled from the pages of Gerard and other enthusiasts of the past. Not to prove a skill that long has been demonstrated, but only to show by example what the reader may expect to find, we give a description of "the most beautiful tree in all the world"—the phrase is that of "E. V. B.":

It is a willow—grand, immense in both bulk and height. It is mirrored in the glassy farm pond near, where cattle cool their feet and drink, and shelter beneath the shadow of it when the sun is hot. Walk past a little way, then turn and look back, and gaze upon the tree rising up into the blue, in the glory of its countless silver. The grey of it is like an olive-grove on the hill slopes of Estelle. The shimmering leaves, as the light breeze lifts them, are like the silvery turn of olive sprays when the south wind blows. One longs to sit down before the tree with an easel and a big canvas. Most hopeless of tasks! Words cannot paint the rhythm of its triad foliage; no painter's brush could give the glimmering grey of it.

That picture of a willow should be set in a gallery with Dorothy Wordsworth's birch and the oak of Richard Jefferies. We have room for only one more extract, and it is chosen rather for the gardening amateur than the literary gardener:

Have you seen the green rose? You would love it if you knew it well. Ours—with a plant of that rare delight, white lavender—was sent to me from Tabley Hall, whose lady devotes herself to all old-fashioned garden flowers. It is very curious, yet far too fine a thing to rank only as a curiosity. I have grown to think the green rose beautiful in its own weird way. . . . You must go close up and look it in the face, or you will not know the bush is really flowering. Then what seems at first all leafage is transformed into a mass of roses green.

Our other book is of an altogether different sort. The authoress tells us she read White's *Selborne*, and thereafter wished to do for the parish of Hayford in Norfolk what has already been accomplished for Selborne. For the length of three or four pages she most gravely adheres to the model and then—why then, in a charmingly feminine way, she forgets all about it, and the bulk of the book consists of conversations between birds, of which a single specimen will probably entertain more than our description could:

"Madam," rejoined the kestrel blandly, "pardon me, but I think you have made a mistake, for no ladies are admitted to —"

"Lady!" shrieked she. "Don't call me a lady; call me a woman! Yes, I'm a woman, and I'm proud of it. Let me tell all you men present —"

"Madam, excuse my interruption, but you are evading the point, which is, that no lady, I mean no woman, is permitted to be present at this august —"

"First of July, isn't it?" laughed the jackdaw.

These be japes indeed, and the book is rich in them. Another pleasant device of the authoress is to invert the gender of her pronouns, so that such a quaint sentence as the following is not uncommon: "*He* once laid eight eggs in a rotten tree in the parish" (p. 238). On the very next page the pronoun is changed throughout an old rhyme that we at all events have never seen printed so before. The italics are ours:

In April come *she* will  
In May *she* sings all day  
In June *she* changes her tune,  
In July *she* begins to fly  
In August *go* she must.

We do not for a moment doubt that the author, who is not usually ill-informed, knows as well as the reader that it is the cock bird that is referred to, and does this, as children say, on purpose, only we do not quite see her object. On the whole, we feel inclined to recommend her to return to the old ways and call the male "he" and the female "she."

## A Gentlewoman of the Slums.

*The Autobiography of a Charwoman.* As Chronicled by Annie Wakeman. (John Macqueen. 6s.)

ANNIE WAKEMAN'S (Mrs. L. A. Lathrop's) book belongs to the same *genre* as Mr. Clarence Rook's *Hooligan Nights*. It is a selective biography, shaped from a verbal narrative given to the writer. We believe that the great danger in writing such a record is that of making it too long. The reader cannot be in close personal relation either with the writer who reports or with the person who is reported. He misses in the writer the freedom of the novelist, and he misses in the subject the freedom of the autobiographer. But the writer himself, being in direct contact with his subject, is apt to be unconscious of these conditions. He hopes to be a perfect conduit between the speaker and the public. But personality can never be so conveyed with complete success. The writer must shape, embellish, suppress, and control the written record; and though all his touches may be in the interests of fidelity, yet every artistic touch defeats, in a manner, its own end, so that there slowly arrives a page when the method is seen to be a little leaky and a little fatiguing. The critical moral is that books of this kind should be *short*; but the public, accustomed to books of a standard length at a standard price, exert an unconscious pressure on publisher and author, with the result that they get full measure, but the liquor is somewhat diluted. We feel that this is the case with an otherwise admirable book. It would have gained by pruning. The interest of the book lies in the character, morals, and humour of a London charwoman; but these would have displayed themselves in a smaller number of incidents and situations than are actually employed for the purpose.

This said, and we hope we have said it without over-emphasis, there is nothing to do but to advise the reader to read this most amusing and touching record of a woman of the people. Mrs. Dobbs, as she eventually became, had her full share of the ups and downs of life in a sphere where ups and downs meant varying degrees of privation. She was a thoroughly sound, self-respecting woman, who loved her children, was fond of flowers and music, was a born cook and nurse, and dragged herself and her family through life with infinite toil and resource and cheerfulness, keeping her innate sweetness and even her personal beauty. Her errors were completely circumscribed by her virtues. Betrayed and forsaken by "a real gent," she instantly recovered her tone of mind, and set to work to do right by his child—fighting her way back to respectability. Yet she could glory in the glimpse of high life she had enjoyed:

I 'ad loved, and see life with a gent. Nobody could take that mem'ry from me. I never blamed 'im. Not likely 'ee could bother over a charnce offspring. I'd done wrong, and I was sorry, and I must swaller me gruel and make no wry faces over it. It's no good chewin' your wrongs, it only gives you indigestion. Besides wick, wen a woman makes 'er fust babby close she feels a kind of solemn joy a-liftin' 'er up, and that's why 'er under lip looks so lovin' and gentle and appealin' wen she meets strangers.

Among strangers, in an alley off the Euston-road, Betty became the mother of "an uncommon fine boy," as Dr. Crampton made mention."

I forgot ev'rything else, fur me thoughts was all on me son, and I was 'appy in thinkin' over and choosin' a 'igh-class name fit fur the son of a real gent. At larst I lighted on Ferdinand Harther, callin' of 'im "Ferdie" for short, and makin' up me mind 'ee should 'ave the best I could give 'im, if I worked fur 'im day and night, so as 'ee should be a credit to 'is father, even if he never know'd 'im.

Ferdie never did know his father, but Ferdie remained the apple of his mother's eye through all her

domestic experiences. His "igh class" ways did not seem to lead him to success, but they were perpetual reminders of his good origin. His mother's most tragic moment came many years later when her husband, the little-worth but handsome Dobbs, a "snobber" by trade, and "the Dook" by nickname, took Ferdie into the middle of Hampstead Heath and told him the secret of his birth. Ferdie had by that time gone into lodgings of his own; and thither his mother took train and 'bus with a heavy heart, to recapture her son's love. This produces the most poignant piece of irony in the book:

'Ee was at the door, goin' in, as I arrived. Wen I spoke 'ee avoided me, like I'd 'ad the plague, makin' me explanation 'arder fur me. But I follered 'im upstairs and into 'is room. 'Ee never spoke. I lit the lamp, got 'is slippers out, put the room a bit to rights, and waited patient.

At last I begun. I told 'im me life from a child till 'ee was born. I said no word cruel of 'is father and I didn't try to excuse me own conduc'. But I told 'im 'ow I'd sung in the streets fur 'im in rain and fog, layin' in rheumatics fur me old age. And I begged of 'im to forgive me. 'Ee made no reply. I set quiet, then the old life come over me and I wep' bitter. In two or three minutes Ferdie put 'is arms round me, and 'ee says, "Mother, I forgive you!" That's wot 'ee would natural say, bein' born of a 'igher class 'm. I was so full of rejoice over 'is goodness that I larfed and cried to wunst.

In another vein are the descriptions of the weddings of Betty's sons, Tim and John 'Enery. Tim's chosen partner, Florrie, was an East End match girl, who spoke the dialect of Bow with such purity that even Mrs. Dobbs could scarcely understand it. But Florrie always said her prayers, and meant well by Tim. "She talks Cockney, but thinks Park-lane, in a manner of speaking," was her mother-in-law's verdict. The wedding was engineered principally by John 'Enery, now in almost affluent circumstances. The exclusive Ferdie didn't go to the wedding: "you see 'm, there was lines Ferdie couldn't cross, being the son of a gent."

Leavin' the church, we was all covered with rice, enough to make puddins fur months to come, I should say, fur the factory gells was all there to give a cheer fur the bride. Then the principal ones took four-wheel cabs to Florrie's 'ome. There was 'er fambly, me, and the nearest of the "old fambly friends." The dinner was mostly fluids—gin bein' cheaper than joints and producin' 'igh spirits quicker—but no one was drunk. . . . After dinner we 'ad some music, and I sung "Then You'll Remember Me," and "Er Bright Smile 'Aunts Me Still," afore we started off fur supper at me own 'ome—me tryin' to give the shake to some of them "fambly friends." But lor! you might as well a tried to knock off a limpet. They all come, and their eyes bunged out when they see a proper supper—a cold joint, a cold goose, salads, cheese, sweets, and a weddin' cake, with claret and port at two shillin's the bottle, and a drop of sperrits fur the men—all paid fur by John 'Enery, who wasn't goin', as 'ee said with pride, to see 'is brother marry beneath 'im without teachin' 'is new sister-in-law's people 'ow their betters conducted their share of weddin's.

To the "Dook's" eternal credit he was sober and civilised on this occasion. He brought to the banquet all the majesty of his height and his big voice, all the ease of his assured strength, and, what was even more valuable, the trained eloquence of a man accustomed to speak up at his Club.

Never 'ave I been prouder of Dobbs. . . . 'Ee made the openin' speech, Florrie's father respondin' fur the bride, Tim bein' too shy. Lawk! wen I yeared that speech of Dobbs's I wondered wotever Parlyment 'ad been doin' that Dobbs wasn't in the 'Ouse of Commons.

'Ee begun by referrin' to the Queen, the Army, Navy, and Reserve Forces, bangin' 'is 'and on the table for us to applaud, wick we did 'earty. Then 'ee says, "And now I come to the bride—our new Queen—Tim bein' Army, Navy, and Reserve Forces all in 'isself." We all laughed and called "Year, year!" Tim looked uncomfortable and scared, as if 'eed suddent swallered somethink the



wrong way. The Dook went on and says, "Ladies and gents," and yere the "famby friends" set up straighter and put on a expression of a fust-class limited company when shares is goin' up. 'Ee says, "I repeat, ladies and gents, I 'ave to-day lost a son, but I 'ave found a daughter."

This was layin' it on fairish thick, fur Ferdie, who give a quiet laugh to 'isself, knowin' 'ow Dobbs despised Tim, and never regardin' of him as a son. Florrie looked beamin, throwin' a kiss at Dobbs, wile she give Tim a dig and motioned 'im to rise and bow, which 'ee did, lookin' nowhere in partie'ler.

Amid all her fidelities—and they were many—Betty Dobbs remained faithful to her early error. On her death-bed she spoke plainly on the matter:

'Arry was the only gent in me career, and I see life with 'im, and I love 'is memory, and I love 'is offspring, and 'ave tried to be a good mother to 'im. Me one foot is in the grave at this minute as I'm speakin' to you 'im, and that bein' so, I can honest say as I ain't frettin' over me sin with Ferdie's father. I told you as I wouldn't never repent it—no more 'ave I. And them was the views as I give to the Vicar. . . . 'Ee talked very kind to me, and most affectin', and 'ee seemed to sense me complete, understandin' me point of view, though 'ee didn't say so in words, as 'ow could 'ee, repentance bein' a special point with vicars. 'Ee didn't argify the point. 'Ee always cuts 'is coat accordin' to 'is cloth, by which I mean 'ee meets the needs of them as 'ee talks to, 'is remarks bein' full of tao'. 'Is tex' was love, leavin' out vengeance fur them as is bent on chivvyin' people. The Vicar never chivvies no one into 'eaven, and 'ee was comfortin' and give me 'ope and peace. I told 'im as 'ow I should live less of a 'eaven durin' the rest of me short journey by reason of 'is comfortin' words.

We have relied on extracts, rather than on floating praise, to commend this book. It is delightful in its kind. The illustrations by "Rip" are well conceived; indeed, the frontispiece picture of the wedding party, with the "Dook" proposing the Army, Navy, and Reserve Forces, is excellent. So is the realisation of the Charwoman on the cover.

### A Book of Parody.

*The Girl with Feet of Clay.* By Edgar Turner.  
(Long. 6s.)

OF all the dishes in the literary banquet none offers so piquant a flavour as the parody, and from none do we exact so high a degree of excellence. A mediocre parody is a poor thing, and a long parody is a poor thing. In parody we want only the essence, the heart of hearts. We permit length only to burlesques, which are different. Thackeray's "Rebecca and Rowena," for example, is burlesque, Mr. Burnand's "'Strapmore,' by Weeder," and "'One and Three,' by Fictor Nogo," are burlesques; but Mr. Bret Harte's "Miss Miggs" is parody, and Calverley's "Lovers—and a Reflection" is parody, and Mr. Seaman's "Ballad of a Bun" is parody. Briefly defined (but the attempt to define is, we know, foolishly temeritous), parody might be called a comic condensation of a mind and style; burlesque, a comic extension of them.

Mr. Turner hovers between the two states, that of parodist and that of burlesque writer. The result may not be a valuable addition to the literature of comic criticism (which is what both parody and burlesque amount to), but it is amusing reading. What we miss from Mr. Turner's work is any power to master difficulties. His very choice of subjects—or victims—suggests this incapacity. He aims low. Not Mr. Meredith, Mr. Hardy, Mrs. Ward, Mr. Barrie, but Mr. Crockett, Mr. Le Gallienne, Miss Corelli, Mr. Jerome. That is to say, not great manners so much as small mannerisms attract him. And, of course the small mannerisms practically parody

themselves. Mr. Le Gallienne, for example, is the simplest material. Mr. Turner has done his task very well and very cleverly, but it was facile. Here is a passage from *The Girl with Feet of Clay*, a perversion of *The Quest of the Golden Girl*.

I had promised to meet at Blackfriars, and to take to see the procession, a lady whom I sometimes suffered to pass a hand through my long fine hair. But such promises are kept only when it is convenient to keep them. I looked at the Titian hair and throat, and I looked at the eyes like new-born passion flowers. Then I asked the girl whether she would come with me to a window where I had seats.

"With all my heart," she said; and her voice was gentle and clear as fairy marriage bells.

We left the train at the Temple, and went to the seats I had booked on Ludgate Hill. It must have been a joyful quarter of an hour to the girl. Before she had only walked with soulless men—men who know not art, men to whom Aucassin and Nicolette are but names or less than names. Now she walked with a man of romance, a man of feeling, a man to whom the mysteries are not mysteries, but laughing, labelled graces.

We sat, she and I alone together, while the procession went slowly by. Sometimes I held her hand, sometimes I touched her shoe with mine, and always I talked. I pictured to her a future—how that together we would read Bernard Shaw for the first wonderful time, together learn Max Beerbohm's works by heart, together roll over an A.B.C. table the sumptuous cadences of Stephen Phillips.

That is neat and amusing, and it shows that full familiarity with the victim's work which is needful to the good parodist.

No one else inspires Mr. Turner quite so successfully. Miss Corelli incites him to something nearer spleen. His treatment of her is merciless. Mr. Turner imagines her as a little girl who has never grown up, and he explains why:

Twenty years ago the crusade for the emancipation of women began. Articles descriptive of the hardships of their position appeared in newspapers and reviews. Meetings to assert their claims to equal rights with men were held. The first of the insurrectionary novels was published.

I was only ten then, but even at that age I liked to be in touch with the question of the day. I read one of the articles and went to one of the meetings. They frightened me. I had long known that I was growing up to be a woman, and now I learned that most women were oppressed and unhappy.

Eager for full particulars, I read the insurrectionary novel. I learned from it that men were selfish savages and women their natural victims, and I became still more frightened. Was it worth while, I asked myself, to grow up? As a little girl I was sa'e, but as a woman I should be in constant danger. Was it worth while? . . . At last I made up my mind. If I became a woman, the odds on my falling a victim to some man would be about twelve to one. The risk was too great. I decided to stop growing, and to remain a little girl.

The book is not all parody. There are some original stories, one of which, "The Soul of the Woman," is very promising for Mr. Turner's own individual career. Perhaps the time has come for him to embark upon this career seriously. Our advice to him is to consider the present diverting volume his literary wild oats, and turn his back upon it and upon the study of his contemporaries and the "Literary Gossipers" who comment upon them. His own work lies before him. Meanwhile we are grateful for some light chuckling.

## Other New Books.

A SPORTSWOMAN IN INDIA.

BY ISABEL SAVORY.

There is something pathetic in the sporting temperament. "I am in violent motion; I encounter danger; therefore I am alive," it seems to say. It wonders whether people who pay afternoon calls and sit at desks are alive. *En revanche*, the sporting temperament causes a vast amount of discomfort to people who are not engaged in proving their vitality. That is the impression derived from the perusal of the effervescent narrative before us. Miss Savory goes pig-sticking. The pig objects, whereupon he overthrows "two wretched women . . . who were going down the road with waterpots; both were badly cut." Or Miss Savory goes tiger-hunting and an unfortunate coolie (you hire coolies for about fourpence a day) is bitten through the thigh, and dies. Or she rides along a precipice and her horse is dashed to pieces. So our sportswoman is big with fate, and the Puritan may sniff. But whether sport for sport's sake be admissible or not, there can be no question that in sport Miss Savory finds the natural expression of her individuality. Here is no mere globe-trotter's record. She has shot a tiger on foot while he was charging, and has stood four yards from an infuriated black bear. In her eager fearlessness she reminds us of the late George Kingsley. The emotion she gives to sport is intelligent; by a paradox it includes an admiration for the creatures she kills greater than ours who pity them in their helpless contest with the skill of man. Hence this veritable animal story-book, apart from the curious profusion of quotations which pepper it, has its own poetic interest. Take this description of a tiger:

Suddenly there was a sound—monkeys trooping through the jungle, high in the trees, grasping the pliant branches and shaking them with rage! . . . Another second, the jungle-grass waved and crackled, and out into the open emerged and advanced slowly a picture of fearful beauty. . . . On he came, his cruel eyes largely blinking in the sun. His long slouching walk, suggestive of such latent strength, betrayed the vast muscle working firmly through the loose, glossy skin, which was clear red and white, with its double stripes, and the W mark on the head. The sight of such consummate power, as he swung majestically along, licking his lips and his moustache after his feed, was one of those things not soon to be forgotten.

It was this tiger that ran up the tree where Miss Savory's companion was posted, and "tore his finger all down the back of it to the bone." She shot the tiger as he clasped the tree, and "How could she!" many women will exclaim.

One is amused with the irony which brought this Diana into the presence of a very pious little girl, the daughter of a Civil Servant. There was one little boy at the tea-party in question, and he had been reciting the Lord's Prayer "in stentorian tones." "I asked the little girl," says Miss Savory, "where her other brothers were." "Tom's at school [she replied], and Arthur's in Paradise; he's flying about with wings like a vulture."

Here we take leave of a portly but companionable volume. It is, let us add, freely illustrated. The pencil of Mr. Wimbush, whose name appears on several drawings, does not hesitate at the most tremendous themes. (Hutchinson. 16s.)

PARIS OF THE PARISIANS.

BY JOHN F. MACDONALD.

The triumph of civilisation is this—the show of *naïveté* without the reality of childlikeness. Of this triumph Paris is a splendid illustration. It is not only we who see her thus; it is thus she sees herself. From the classic pages of Murger to the latest *Guide des Plaisirs à Paris* the "coquine," as Daudet's Planus called her, has ever the same bewildering freshness of aspect, she is always the queen of siren cities. Mr. Macdonald's clever volume of

impressions, to which Miss Katie Macdonald contributes some bright chapters, is throughout reflective of the charm exercised by the seemingly-ingenuous, and the gaiety which is as instinctive as a religious emotion. Who can get angry with this Paris that says, with one voice, "n'en parlons plus" when you ask its opinion on the Dreyfus verdict, and calls the "new century" problem the "Nouvelle Affaire"? It is like a child. It "loves incongruities"; it will "make October May by decking the trees on the Champs Elysées with artificial blossoms and buds." It is cruel with grace, and again it is ignorant with grace.

Imagine an Englishman sensible of his commission of a public mistake in eating; he becomes red and dejected; he is far from amused. For comparison, listen to a French lady struggling to eat a bun with a fork. "On dit que le muffin est encore plus pervers," she remarks. Though the world observe her she cannot be confounded with her mistake.

Work with us is grimly done, and if it is paid for treated as a matter of course. That is not the view of French carpenters. "Venez, donc." Approach the handstand with them. Peer at it. Go down on your knees with them. Feel that board. Look at that screw. . . . Only they know what work is. . . . Know that they toiled and toiled and toiled for hours and hours and hours, . . . bravely and uninterruptedly, beneath a fearful sun." It is playing with life, and one may say the same of the facile affections of the Quartier Latin. But there is a philosophy in that attitude, so long as the mask be never allowed to fall. And in a particularly brilliant sketch, "The Tragedies of Montmartre," Mr. Macdonald shows how the religion of gaiety is kept up at the cost of reason itself in the "feverish atmosphere of the 'Butte.'" It is a terrible position that of High Priest in the Temple of Pleasure; it is like playing the bones with one's spirit; but the Parisian knows where to rusticate when he feels *énervé*. At Pré Catelan he takes milk, and is soon so restored as to ask, "'Which is my Cow?' 'I refuse,' he proceeds, 'to go home until I have sung my cow a song.' As no one can point her out, he resolves to sing to them all, one after the other, starting with the first." Paris, the professionally gay, is not the only Paris; the bookworms who haunt the quays would tell us otherwise, and so would thousands of her industrious citizens. Their children make a pretty spectacle in this charming book; and, in fine, Paris is fond of them and all her children, because she is like a child herself, and knows the difference between the likeness and the reality. (Richards. 5s.)

THE EARLY HISTORY OF ENGLISH  
POOR RELIEF.

BY E. M. LEONARD.

With the dissolution of the monasteries, the break-up of feudal households, and changes in industry, a numerous, well-defined pauper class for the first time emerged. Bands of vagrants—"a rowsey, ragged rabblement of rakehelles"—roamed over the land, robbing and burgling. The secular powers, therefore, were driven to exact what charity refused to give, and thus the erratic doles of individuals were gradually replaced by systematic grants of relief under State compulsion. Miss Leonard shows that poor relief was at first partly a police measure, and reasonably suggests that our legal system of relief largely accounts for the comparative absence of violent catastrophes in our history.

Not until Henry VIII.'s reign was relief effectively organised in London and a few other towns. Municipal orders, having proved successful, became the basis of legislation. Statute followed statute, however, without any substantial results, because the enforcement of the law was irregular. Even the great Elizabethan poor law of 1601, which served as the foundation of our system of relief for 233 years, was not at first effectively carried out.



Strangely enough, a better administration of the law was secured by the Privy Council in the period 1629 to 1640. The Council, which during these years was guilty of notorious tyranny and misrule in the general affairs of State, achieved more by illegal orders and proclamations than had been achieved previously by legal processes. This paternal body not only cared for children and the impotent poor, but provided work as a livelihood for able-bodied parishioners, and hard labour for sturdy vagrants. The decrees of the Council were enforced most strictly in the Puritan counties. Probably the design of the Government was to secure the adhesion of the poorer classes to despotic rule; but, whatever the motive, the result of efficient relief was seen in a cessation of complaints by the justices of vagrancy, felonies, and disorders down to the time of the Civil War.

The history of poor relief shows conclusively that the fundamental difficulty of every system lies not in legislation but in administration. The law may draw distinctions between "valiant beggars" and the deserving poor, but the guile of the adept pauper may baffle the most expert relieving officer.

Miss Leonard has dealt in a clear and forcible style with a subject of permanent interest. The scope and method of her work have been well conceived, and she is scholarly without being dull. (Cambridge University Press.)

## Fiction.

*The West End.* By Percy White.  
(Sands & Co. 6s.)

THIS novel begins, and continues for a long time, in a manner which is deceptively modest and unassuming. The narrator, Rupert Atherton, lame orphan nephew of an excessively rich wholesale provision dealer, mildly introduces himself, and announces his intention of telling you how John Treadaway's family ("Treadaway's Teas," see omnibus boards) took the West End by storm, and entered into the kingdom of the smart. The family consisted of Treadaway, his wife, their daughter Miranda, their son Archie—and Rupert, who was his uncle's secretary and intelligencer. The drama begins by the building of a palace in Park-lane. One by one the strings are pulled: the necessary complaisant Countess is discovered; the necessary enterprises of charity are undertaken; the newspapers begin to talk; old acquaintances are dropped; and even among the new ones the less smart are sifted from the more. When Mrs. Treadaway is indisposed, she has the *migraine*. So the vast and perfectly honest intrigue proceeds, financed and engineered by John Treadaway, but kept in a smooth, level motion by the watchful diplomacy of Rupert. You read on and on, and what you feel is that you are being diverted by a sound skill neatly used. The plot is full of ingenuities, changes, contrasts. You are shown how the Treadaways, old-fashioned in morals to the last, narrowly escape the crushing wheels of a scandal; how Mr. Treadaway once nearly doubts his wife's virtue; how this adventurer and that true lover seek the hand of the beautiful, sensible, and strong-minded Miranda; how Archie, wild, often fatuous, but good-natured, joins a crack cavalry regiment; and how Rupert, scorned by many, patronised by others, and secretly feared and admired by a few, really occupies a twin-throne with his uncle at the very heart of the great movement. . . . Possibly you wonder what power is carrying you through this book so nicely; for there is no high emotional quality and no compelling charm of style. You are merely interested. You think you could put this book down.

But could you? Perhaps you might, up to a point, but not after the Transvaal War has supervened in the tale. You then immediately find out that the author has had

you in his grasp for a long time; he has only to close his fingers and you will be held fast. Well, he closes them. He never achieves a distinguished style, but he achieves emotion, and he manages his plot with absolute virtuosity. The grip is tightened, and you cannot escape. You perceive now that all those kaleidoscopic pictures of smart and plutocratic society and of the usurious underworld have fulfilled a part pre-arranged for them; all this mild satire and witty analysis has had a deeper purpose than seemed to you. From the moment that Archie, that foolish, boyish, beloved subaltern, leaves for South Africa, the story bursts out into its true colours of dignified and austere tragedy. The terrible war-atmosphere of London last winter envelops everything; you live over again the week of Magersfontein and of Stormberg. You hold your breath while Rupert opens the halfpenny evening paper in front of four footmen. Then comes the news of Archie's death ("There seemed, even at that rigid, leaden moment, something incongruous in a Treadaway dying for his country"), and then the laying bare of his secret, scandalous marriage, and the disaster of the *divorcée*, who is about to bring into being the sole heir to the Treadaway baronetcy and millions. It is a stringent, appalling finale, with Miranda's happiness to lighten it.

*The West End* is a fine social satire, but it is a great deal more than that. Mr. Percy White has done nothing so good before.

*The Gifts of Enemies.* By G. E. Mitton.  
(A. & C. Black. 6s.)

THIS novel is unsatisfactory, distinctly inferior to the author's first book, *A Bachelor Girl in London*; but it is the work of a man who has the capacity to write a reasonably excellent story. Mr. Mitton is gifted with a sense of the dramatic. Several times in the course of *The Gifts of Enemies* he uses this gift with effect—particularly in the two affairs of the Yorks v. Surrey cricket match and the gambling-club raid. Further, his character-drawing is not without merit. That strange girl, Rosa Wybrow, who begins the tale by killing a man, is very well realised. The hero, Neil Hawtrey, baronet and professional cricketer, whose adventures constitute the theme of the novel, is a grey and neutral person, neither attractive nor powerful. His attributes are the attributes of the book, which is chiefly commonplace. Mr. Mitton *sees* with some earnestness, but he sees nothing fresh. He is at the trouble to tell us what we already know; and were it not for his ingenuity in striking fire from the collision of events, the story would be of an unredeemed tameness. The following passage, taken from the description of an Empire ballet, shows Mr. Mitton's shortcomings as an observer and describer:

All the cunning invention, all the contrast of colour that artistic power could devise and money procure, had been lavished on the gorgeous scene. It was a symphony of colour, a harmony of sight. Hundreds of girls in soft art silks of radiant hues moved in rhythmic motion—a flash—and there were a hundred glowing daffodils, replaced a second later by tulip and narcissus; the motive was the procession of flowers throughout the year. By combination of colour, by deftly-flung draperies, the flowers of each season were represented following each other in lines and filmy waves; a breeze seemed to waft over them, they bowed, and rose again more resplendent than before in new and vivid tints. Hundreds crowded upon hundreds, until the culmination was reached in the national flower of England, the rose, which . . .

All which is quite futile.

Not infrequently Mr. Mitton's style descends to the worst badness of Fleet-street. On p. 9 is that weird adjective "horney"; on p. 26 is a culpable error of mere grammar; on p. 26 the word "phenomenon" is used in

a wrong sense; on p. 101 we read "the girl had a Madonna-like purity of feature and expression" (imagine the audacity of an author who can employ that phrase again!); on p. 134 someone "suggested an adjournment to the Empire." The catalogue of peccadilloes might be extended indefinitely. The worst sin of the book is the amazing and entirely inexcusable street accident coincidence on p. 322. Nevertheless, despite our serious discontent with this particular novel, we have hopes of Mr. Mitton.

*The Priest's Marriage.* By NORA VYNNE.  
(Burleigh. 6s.)

BOTH in these columns and elsewhere it has been noted how hardly a man hammered, *tusione plurima*, into a Catholic priest may transform himself into the likeness of the world. The subject is well worthy of treatment. Mr. Howells attempted it long ago and, sober realist that in these days he is, produced melodrama; at any rate, his book was melodramatised very successfully for Mr. Benson. Miss Vynne, in her account of the process by which Stravel comes to see in his wife his sin incarnate, does not quite escape the same condemnation. The moment in which Annie, approaching her husband to tell him that she is to become a mother, is repulsed with a word which "Christ alone ever spoke kindly," and a blow on the breast with a crucifix, should prove effective behind the footlights. Yet, though as a whole the book is an intelligent and careful piece of work, we confess that we do not altogether believe in Stravel. True, he is free from the grosser absurdities and incoherences which encompass the priest in the hands of many excellent writers; he fills even with some dignity his place in the story of which he is the organic centre. But the red blood of the book runs in the arteries of the minor characters, and particularly of the group of girls out of which our priest selects his bride. Miss Vynne has studied a certain type of the young woman on the hither borders of Suburbia to some purpose: she knows her tricks and manners—her shrewdness, her simplicity, her ignorance, her narrowness of outlook, her whole-hearted devotion to the duty of securing, first for herself and afterwards for her sisters, a husband. From an early chapter come these characteristic fragments:

"Ella is right; Nan is good, of course, dreadfully good, but Mr. Stravel does not love her for that. He loves her because he thinks she's good, but he only thinks she's good because she's pretty. . . ."

"I'm too stupid naturally," said the shy girl, "so I suppose I ought to marry very well."

"That's quite a different thing," said Ella, who was screwing her hair into pins. "Natural stupidity is like naturally curling hair, it never twists in quite the right way. You'll have to learn to be clever, Dolly, and then learn to hide it."

"Yes," said Effie, "because the husband who married you for not being clever would be sure to neglect you for not being clever afterwards. The really clever thing is to make him love you because he thinks you a silly, ignorant little thing, and then make him go on loving you because he finds you a clever woman."

A well-constructed story, written in a direct, concise style, which will add to its author's reputation as a novelist; but her short stories are better.

#### Notes on Novels.

[These notes on the week's Fiction are not necessarily final. Reviews of a selection will follow.]

FOR BRITAIN'S SOLDIERS. BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Fifteen well-known writers have presented stories to this book, the profits of which will go to the War Fund. The book will be on sale for three months only. The fare

offered seems excellent. Among the contributors are Sir Walter Besant, Mr. Kipling, Mr. Crockett, Mr. Mason, Mr. Ridge, and Mr. Wells. (Methuen. 6s.)

THE BANKER AND THE BEAR. BY HENRY K. WEBSTER.

An American story of financial interest, showing how the hero tried to form a corner in lard. It is a little to be regretted that the heroine passes under the masculine name of Dick. Witnessing an exciting scene at the Board of Trade, Dick asked: "Are they doing anything but yell?" . . . "Anything but yell!" he quoted. "They're making a price that will rule in all the markets of the world." Lard and love. (Macmillan. 6s.)

AN EYE FOR AN EYE. BY WILLIAM LE QUEUX.

This time Mr. Le Queux weaves his mystery in London, and the mystery-hunters are journalists and detectives. At the outset we have a novelty in the shape of a detective inspector who will not report a crime he has discovered because it is mixed up with a snake, and he has private superstitions about snakes. The story is full of verve and sharply realised incident. (White & Co. 6s.)

THE SIN OF ATLANTIS. BY ROY HORNIMAN.

"The shorter of the two men was Edwin Lever, occultist and individualist. The other was Michael Broadhurst, occultist and altruist, and everything which the latter carries with it. . . . Broadhurst, unruffled, smiled most humorously. 'Was it to organise evil that you went to Tibet ten years ago?'" (Macqueen. 6s.)

THE CRIMSON CRYPTOGRAM. BY FERGUS HUME.

"A Midnight Surprise"—"The Writing in Blood"—"The Reading of the Blood Signs"—"A Music Hall Star"—"What Mrs. Amber Knew"—"The Red Pocket Book": such are some of the chapter headings of this lineal descendant of *The Mystery of a Hansom Cab.* (John Long. 3s. 6d.)

THE SHIELD OF HIS HONOUR. BY RICHARD HENRY SAVAGE.

Russian melodrama by the clever author of *My Official Wife.* The atmosphere is that of wealth, the highest military and diplomatic circles; Grand Dukes, and Excellencies, and Cossack colonels, and great bankers move through the story, which is laid in St. Petersburg and New York. (White & Co. 6s.)

TOWN LADY AND COUNTRY LASS. BY FLORENCE WARDEN.

"It was in the days of King George the Second," begins this love story by the author of *The House on the Marsh*, "when England and France stood watching each other like snarling dogs on either side of a ditch." The King is one of the characters in a story that lacks nothing of action, but on the whole provides a quiet old-English type of interest. (White & Co. 6s.)

FOR RIGHT AND ENGLAND. BY HUME NISBET.

A tissue of abuse and bad taste, this novel purports to draw the portrait of Mr. Kruger, who is introduced as the preacher in the Dopper church at Pretoria. He is promptly compared to a gorilla, a wild boar, an octopus. "Imagine a criminal of the most brutal type," &c. (White & Co. 6s.)

JUGGLING FORTUNE. BY T. W. SPEIGHT.

Mr. Speight's earlier stories have been of a more melodramatic cast than this "Everyday Romance," dealing with commercial and middle-class life. Romance is perhaps hardly the term to apply to a story of which the hero begins life as an artist, and a few years later is the patentee of a mincing-machine; but that is a trifle. Though not exciting, the story justifies itself by its careful study of financial life. (John Long. 3s. 6d.)



## THE ACADEMY.

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## The Omar Cult.

SOMEONE who has a dry humour and keen insight ought to write the history of the modern cult of Omar Khayyam. In France the suggestion would not need to be made; some gay psychologist would already be at work on a task offering such rich material of tragedy, comedy, and humbug.

Those who desire to do this thing should dip their pens at once. Every day the inducements to the task are becoming more irresistible. It were best to be first in the field. The material for the final chapters is beginning to arrive, and it is of a sort which promises more rollicking fun than any earlier elements in this strange affair. But, indeed, the whole story is curious, picturesque, and pathetic in high degrees. Consider how your historian's mere rough notes would crackle with possibilities and opportunities, seen far ahead. Naishapur—Woodbridge. Omar—FitzGerald. How one might embroider on these connexions. The utter improbability of FitzGerald being drawn to a far-off, forgotten Persian poet, and the incredibility of his making an English poem out of a Persian one in the intervals of indolent sailing in the *Scandal*, and a sixth reading of Madame Sévigné's Letters. The impossibility of the result interesting more than a few eccentrics in these islands. The publication, in spite of all; and the silent Cimberian passage of the book to Mr. Quaritch's twopenny box. FitzGerald's death. Then the slow discovery. Mr. Swinburne's appreciation. Mr. Meredith's. The Whisper as a force in literature. Tennyson's "divinely well." The fact—the indubitable fact—that this shy, dumb, ruminative recluse and bookman, whose love of literature seemed to leave him no time or inclination to produce it, had done a perfect piece of writing. And then the noising abroad of the miracle. The first choice allusions in journalism. The sumptuous talk in Vigo-street. The invocations to "Old Fitz," as to "the gentle Elia." The paragraphs on the spelling of *Rubáiyát*; on its accents; and, lastly, on its meaning. The slow casual awakening of the public. The evolution of a boom. THE BOOM.

We calculate that three chapters would hardly do justice to the boom. Who will sort the material? A plunging humour, as of a leviathan taking the water, will serve the historian best here. Let him toss all on high. There was that letter to the Shah. There was Mr. Le Gallienne's late leap on to the back of Mr. Justin McCarthy. There were the CLUB dinners, and the charts in the *Sketch* showing where Mr. Edmund Gosse sat. And there was the American echo. The way America hustled into Omar, when it got its advices, was real smart. Mr. Mosher easily sold 20,000 cheap copies of the poem, and for the millionaire youth wondrous editions were hatched. One such was advertised quite recently as follows:

RUBÁIYÁT.—Limited edition of fifty copies printed on genuine parchment, every page of each copy illuminated by hand, in gold and colours, bound in vellum, with metal clasps set with semi-precious stones, 100 dols.

We shall always believe that these "semi-precious

jewels" were the beginning of the end. They had hardly ceased to burn their coloured lights in the advertisement columns of the *American Bookman* when Mr. Edgar Fawcett, a writer of some repute, arose and proclaimed through the *New York Journal* that the Omar cult has been a silly "fad" and has illustrated the "hypocrisy of English ethics." He talked of the "ruffian heterodoxy" of "this Persian *bon vivant*." "The most pitiable stuff." "Commonplace is no word for it, since it merely decorates the obvious in wine-drenched garlands and tawdry spangles." And the Omarite message was interpreted: "Get drunk as often as you can, and stay so long as you can, for there's nothing in life half so profitable."

Yet Mr. Fawcett was not, we believe, the first of the iconoclasts. From Dundee there had come the voice of Mr. A. H. Millar in high protest; and, compared with his, Mr. Fawcett's words were as water unto wine. For, while Mr. Fawcett called Omarism a fad, Mr. Millar denounced it as a new creed, "the mournful pessimism" of which "seems strangely out of harmony with the spirit of an age which has witnessed many fervent religious revivals." Prodigious! The Omar cult on one side, and the tents of the Christian Endeavourers whitening Muswell Hill on the other! Ritualism versus the *Rubáiyát*! General Booth and "Old Fitz"! These were unthought of contrasts; and doubtless some useful purpose, not yet discoverable, has been served by Mr. Millar's indication of their existence. Just here it is convenient to remark that Mr. Millar incontinently mixes these tremendous issues with another of less popular, and certainly less material, interest. He contends that the Omar cult as we now know it is rendered absurd by the doubts which beset the very existence of Omar, and by a possibility (which we do not dispute) that the *Rubáiyát* was written nearly four hundred years after the date of Omar's death. Now, Mr. Millar is at liberty to advance, and to prove, any theories he pleases about the authorship of the *Rubáiyát* and the date of its composition. He may declare that Omar never existed, or that Omar is libelled by connecting him with a poem full of "nihilistic sensuality." These are interesting matters, but their settlement requires in those who attempt it a deep knowledge of the Persian language and of Persian history. It is, however, notorious that the Omar cult rests simply on the merits of FitzGerald's English rendering of the *Rubáiyát*. There are probably not a dozen men in England who have any masterly knowledge of the Persian of Omar. These questions about the date, the authorship, and the readings of scattered MSS. have nothing to do with the living "cult" which Mr. Millar wishes to attack. If FitzGerald had evolved Omar from his inner consciousness—had simply created him—his poem would stand where it does, would have gained the same admiration, and would have communicated the same solace to readers of to-day. And if Mr. Millar should produce pat evidence that the Persian *Rubáiyát* is a forgery, that it represents a degraded Mohammedanism, and must have been disowned by Omar, he would have produced nothing more momentous than an interesting foot-note to the English, self-existing poem of FitzGerald. What Mr. Millar fails to see is that FitzGerald's poem is self-existent, and would have been just as effective if Omar and Naishapur and the call to the wine-cup had all originated in his own brain in his Woodbridge cottage. Mr. Millar himself points out—as if it helped his case—that "it is frankly admitted that FitzGerald interpolated many quatrains for which there is no shadow of authority in the original." Precisely in proportion as he did so does his *Rubáiyát* escape injury from Mr. Millar's learned statements about the real Omar, and his decadent imitators of a later day. We can, however, understand Mr. Millar's desire to dwell in this region of the discussion as much as possible. The other line of attack—the attack on the morality of the FitzGerald *Rubáiyát*—must indeed be difficult work. Still,

Mr. Millar has blown no uncertain blast. We really must register again the full text of his warning. The reader will kindly lay down his "Golden Treasury" *Rubáiyát* while we do so.

There is not much comfort in the mournful pessimism of such a creed [as Omar's], and it seems strangely out of harmony with the spirit of an age which has witnessed many fervent religious revivals, and has carefully avoided the pitfalls of Atheism and Materialism. Hence it is probable that the Omarism which has suddenly burst forth within these few years will rapidly sink into oblivion; and the next generation, as the present, will prefer the calm, steady faith of Tennyson's "In Memoriam" and "Crossing the Bar" to the heartless, hopeless, impotent despair of the *Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám*.

So the circle of irony is completing itself. FitzGerald, who hardly dared an essay in *belles-lettres*, has, it seems, promulgated a creed, and the minds of ministers are disturbed.

Only Scottish seriousness could have originated such a view of the matter—could have seen in the purely literary cult of "Omarism" a power for evil equal, let us say, to the present organised power for good exercised by the Particular Baptists; or could have talked of the cult of Omar and "religious revivals" as if the first movement were one of Satan's devices to stop the second. Mr. Millar takes a wrong turning when he imagines that people are radically influenced by the philosophy of the *Rubáiyát*. They are not, and especially is this true if, with Mr. Millar, we take the most positive and least elevated view of that philosophy. Replying to our recent remark that, while many people read Omar, no one takes him for a guide, Mr. Millar says this is a "futile conclusion," and adds: "Surely this is circumscribing seriously the functions of Omarism." Necessarily such a conclusion seems futile to a gentleman whose Knoxian attack on FitzGerald's poem is based precisely on the idea that people are making it their Bible. As for circumscribing the limits of Omarism, we are only circumscribing the limits of the Omarism which exists in Mr. Millar's imagination.

These views of the *Rubáiyát* could originate only in minds which have not the perception of certain luxurious functions of poetry, and of the automatic process by which the mind of the reader enjoys the luxury but does not translate it into action or creed. Is it necessary to argue to a critic of the land of Burns that a man may enjoy songs of drink and free love without losing his moral balance? Mr. Millar can have read but little poetry if he is not aware that there is a poetry which seeks to release weary and dangerous moods by giving them expression. He contrasts the *Rubáiyát* with Tennyson's "In Memoriam"; but has he ever compared it with Tennyson's "Lotus-Eaters"? Has he compared it with certain songs of Horace? with certain utterances of Montaigne? Can he approve the Book of Ecclesiastes, and then disapprove of verses like these:

A Book of Verses underneath the Bough,  
A Jug of Wine, a Loaf of Bread—and Thou  
Beside me singing in the Wilderness—  
Oh, Wilderness were Paradise enow!

Some for the Glories of This World; and some  
Sigh for the Prophet's Paradise to come;  
Ah, take the Cash, and let the Credit go,  
Nor heed the rumble of a distant Drum!

The Worldly Hope men set their Hearts upon  
Turns Ashes—or it prospers; and anon,  
Like Snow upon the Desert's dusty Face,  
Lighting a little hour or two—is gone.

Think, in this batter'd Caravanserai  
Whose Portals are alternate Night and Day,  
How Sultan after Sultan with his Pomp  
Abode his destined Hour, and went his way.

Ah, my Belovéd, fill the Cup that clears  
TO-DAY of past Regrets and Future Fears:  
To-morrow!—Why, To-morrow I may be  
Myself with Yesterday's Sev'n thousand Years.

For some we loved, the loveliest and the best  
That from his Vintage rolling Time hath prest,  
Have drunk their Cup a Round or two before,  
And one by one crept silently to rest.

Ah, make the most of what we yet may spend  
Before we too into the Dust descend;  
Dust into Dust, and Dust to lie  
Sans Wine, sans Song, sans Singer, and—sans End!

The brief truth about the Omar cult we conceive to be this: As a sudden and wide-spread devotion to one fine poem, fanned by advertisement and imitation, and doomed to subside, the cult has its ridiculous aspect. There was really no reason of a satisfying kind why the New Bookishness should not have selected Milton's *Comus* for its fetish instead of FitzGerald's *Rubáiyát*. That had, indeed, been a better choice. But FitzGerald's poem is a fine one; and for our part we take our stand on its intrinsic merits, amused by its alternate fates of neglect, popularity, and opprobrium. These are mere states of the atmosphere. The poem's the thing; and a fine draught it is in the right hour!

## Things Seen.

### The Hill.

YONDER, far away, the hill rose to the blue sky. From every point of the garden that green, heat-capped hill, immemorial sentinel over the opulent, peaceful countryside, was visible. I had seen it in all weathers, this changeless, friendly hill; but on this still summer day, when peace and the world were interchangeable terms, and the warm, flower-scent laden air lulled the senses, I felt almost a feeling of worship towards that green hill. When evening fell; when the sun dipped, and then peeped from behind the fir-trees, and a hush came over the land, someone sang—

But I was up at break of day,  
And brought my flowers along with me.

That gave me the idea. I would that very night absent myself from my bed. I would sleep out of doors; before dawn I would be climbing that hill, and see the sun rise from the summit. Midnight found me feeling my way up, up through the warm, still woods. Little living things scurried across my path, or moved restlessly in the undergrowth as I swung by seeking a place of rest. Did I sleep? I know not, for my eyes were hardly closed before, so it seemed, the birds were twittering of another dawn:

But I was up at break of day,  
And brought my flowers along with me.

I picked them on the hillside, under a sky flecked with red and gold. Beneath stretched the awakening valley, awakening to a day that knew no fear; a day in which the mere joy of living sufficed. As I neared the summit of the hill, I saw above me a mound. I climbed towards it. . . . It was a fort—a fort newly made. The guns were trained over the valley. A soldier stood there peering. And beyond was—France.

### The Hymn-Book.

THE great Assembly Rooms looked bare and dusty in the morning sun. The bits of ribbon, lace, and tulle scattered over the floor, with here and there a piteous crumpled flower, the piles of chairs in the great stone hall below, and the strip of crimson felt which spread its faded length



down the muddy steps—all bore witness to the fact of last night's "soirée."

In the great saloon upstairs some children were having a dancing lesson, and the most lingering of sensuous waltzes came borne to me where I waited.

I thought I would go and watch them.

Round they went in their dainty attire, amid glitter and music and flash.

"The heirs of all the ages." . . . They smiled at me. I smiled back. I stood and wondered at them. . . .

As I passed out of the hall the wind blew a leaflet towards me, and I picked it up and read.

It contained three or four Lenten hymns, as used in a Welsh monastery. . . . How had it come there? . . . Then I remembered that Father I— was preaching there every Sunday, in that same hall where the children were dancing now. . . . A poster bearing his name was before me as I turned. . . . I opened the little book. . . . The hymn that caught my eye was called "*What then.*" . . . And I saw in my dream a kneeling penitent and the face of a priest. . . . The tones of the waltz came borne to me sweeter than ever. . . . I laid the leaflet down on a chair, and went my way . . . and wondered. . . . For I had stood where two worlds met.

"The heirs of all the ages." . . . Heirs of what? This little life—a dance—a dirge—no more? . . . And is that all we call their heritage? . . . And . . . What then? . . .

### "Robert Orange."\*

"JOHN OLIVER HOBBS" has brought to the continued study of the personality whom she calls "Robert Orange" the distinction of her earlier book, *The School for Saints*. Robert Orange ends, as it was clear from the first that he would end, in the religious vocation. Orange marries Brigit, only to discover, on the day after the wedding, that her nominal husband, the wretched Parflete, is alive, and that there is nothing but renunciation for both of them. For a short time Orange lingers on the stage, faintly pursued by the phantom loves of two other women—Lady Fitz-Rewes, whom we know of old, and a new rather "orchidaceous" type, very brilliantly sketched, in the person of Lady Sara de Treverell. A duel with Castrillon, who renews his pursuit of Brigit, hastens the end to which this fine, rather bloodless, character manifestly tends, as Brigit, with her inheritance of the artistic temper, tends towards the unreal but attractive world of the stage. Robert Orange's final surrender of his will to the forces that mastered him in his youth is described in a kind of valedictory letter by Disraeli:

It was his faith to believe that salvation rests on the negation and renunciation of personality. He pushed this to the complete suppression of his will, tenderly considered. I need not detain you on the familiar dogmas of Christianity with regard to the reign of nature and the reign of grace. Your view may be expressed thus:

Puis-qu'il aime à périr, je consens qu'il périsse.

Perhaps this consummation is made less convincing inasmuch as it comes through the stress of an exciting situation, the revulsion of a sensitive nature from a moment of passion, the moving power of which is jealousy. Not having been from the first strongly drawn to Orange's character, I confess that the end of his career leaves me cold. The study of his temperament is to me an historic study, rather than a piece of instant and living portraiture. He seems to be a figure in the world of Disraeli's novels rather than in the society of to-day. 1869, which is Robert

\* *Robert Orange*. Being a continuation of the history of *Robert Orange, M.P.*, and a sequel to *The School for Saints*. By John Oliver Hobbes. (T. Fisher Unwin)

Orange's date, must, indeed, be far from 1899, for I do not feel that I recognise the social atmosphere of the earlier period as having many points of resemblance to that of the later time. Surely unless our social life is all along idealised by a lady who has for literary purposes the advantage of not belonging to the people who produced it, it has grown much coarser than it was. Even Lord Reckage, a most delightful portrait, stands far above the average intellectual interests of the English aristocracy. Perhaps that is because that aristocracy has ceased to exist, or has become a mere ornament and appendage of the money-making type. But at its best I doubt whether in this century at least it possessed the quality of subtlety, of fascination, of semi-poetic beauty, which both Disraeli and "John Oliver Hobbes" appear to have found in it. Both these writers are, indeed, admirable critics of institutions they admire, or seem to admire. Nothing can be more vivacious than the dissection of Lord Reckage or the slight but very humorous sketch of Lord Garrow; but, on the whole, I feel that if all this delightful artificiality ever existed, it at no time possessed the capricious grace of the society of which Reckage is a part. Surely, one asks, this is not England—even the England of the Disraelian period. It is a group by Watteau—something classical and French, like the genius of its author.

Having said so much, it is easy for the critic to surrender himself without reserve to the singular charm of manner, the power of close description of subtle or perverse moods, which increasingly distinguishes "John Oliver Hobbes's" work. Reckage himself is a persuasive and elaborate work of portraiture, which must, I think, have been taken from life—though I cannot identify him with any public character on the stage, now or then. Admirable, indeed, and often profound, is the suggestion of this wilful and corroded temperament, devoted to the mixed pursuit of those frivolous and pious ends which in English life are so closely identified. "John Oliver Hobbes" has a peculiar advantage for analysing this kind of career. She is an American and she is a Catholic—*i.e.*, she can see its ludicrous side and its dilettantism, and that of the Anglican busybodies whom she depicts. You may easily state the objections to the Catholic view of life, but there is one thing which it is not—it is never vulgar. Who can say the same of the Anglican Archbishop, or those other models of temperate piety, the mould of which is the Anglican Church? Her special and avowed portrait—that of Disraeli—I find less satisfactory. It may be true, but I find it hard to read some sentences in Disraeli's conversation and letters, showing a strong feeling for Catholicism, when I remember that their author was the man who introduced and carried the Public Worship Regulation Act. On the whole, perhaps this strange man is more plausible in the sequel than in the earlier book, *The School for Saints*. His sincere affection for personal friends was undoubtedly a characteristic, as it is of many people who, lacking an ideal aim, look at the world with strong emphasis on its folly and its untrustworthiness. But to such a man English society must have been more of a sheer boredom than "John Oliver Hobbes" imagines. Disraeli, we know, was often a silent and indifferent table-companion. Neither as a politician nor as a writer could he long keep the tongue out of his cheek when the subject was English institutions. He flattered the aristocracy, which disliked him; and in a sense, no doubt, he admired it. But he had the intellectual man's contempt for it; the Jew's aversion for anything so self-centred, so self-satisfied.

Of the style of Robert Orange little but praise can be spoken. "John Oliver Hobbes's" gift of epigram even threatens to be something of a danger to the development of her work. She is never satisfied till she gets the *mot juste*—until language has given her the precise reflection of the mood or humour which she desires to convey. The book is full of good sayings, all of them elegant as to

their dress; some profound as to their thought. Take these, for example:

The second-rate mind, whether represented in a person or by a council, shrinks from the adoption of simple measures, and invariably seeks to make itself conspicuous by so placing others as to make them appear unnecessary.

Food, and wine, and money, and fine houses, and amusements were subjects on which he expended a large amount of silent enthusiasm.

Reckage knew well that he was himself too selfish a man to let affection for any one creature come between his soul and its God. There was no self-discipline required in his case when a choice had to be made between a human being and his own advantage—whether temporal or eternal.

An impulse, which had something in it of brute fury, urged him to tear open that still face and drag the thoughts behind it to the light.

Character is the rarest thing in England.

. . . Her quick sympathies rendered the most trivial interchange of ideas an emotional exercise.

The English can never deal with systems or ideas. They can only attack individuals—you depend in a crisis on the passions of men, never on their reason.

No powerful being ever yet stood by the glory, or fell by the disasters, of a love-affair alone, uncomplicated by other issues.

Any man who is written up into a place can be written down out of it.

Society . . . does not practise any of the virtues which it demands from the individual. It ridicules the highest motives, and degrades the most heroic achievements. It is fed with emotions and spectacles: it cries, laughs, and condemns without knowledge and without enthusiasm.

What one feels is that much of this observation of life, so acute and so delicate, is limited by the writer's faith; it springs rather from religious feeling than from the universal philosophy which is the root of the greatest literature. In all her recent books you have the two worlds set in steady contrast—the world of human striving and imperfection, the ideal cloistered world in which the passions have rest, and the soul's progress is at once sure and eternal. The problem which such a treatment of the world's doings suggests can hardly be discussed here. Modern literature seems determined to approach it from a point of view widely different from that of "John Oliver Hobbes." It excepts nothing from its analyses. She, it is clear, excepts much. Her books show increasing literary power, humour, and delicacy of feeling. But they show also an increasing detachment from the world which she often criticises so admirably, and which, unlike her, writes so essentially modern as Ibsen and Tolstoi insist on regarding as a sufficient arena for effort at once profound and stimulating.

H. W. MASSINGHAM.

## Correspondence.

### Style.

SIR,—Will you allow me to offer you my thanks for so kindly taking up the cudgels on my behalf? Certainly I *did* mean more by "conceive" than my correspondents seem to allow—or discern. It seems to me that the man who says anything about style is very much in the same position as the unfortunate, bald-headed gentleman who went to gather honey without his hat. The character of Hamlet, or the Antinomianism of Genius, are subjects which cannot compare with it for offering opportunities for discussion!

I must object to "J. M. S.'s" use of the word "authoritative" concerning my *Dieta*. It is a side-kick which is quite gratuitous. I simply wrote what I thought, and think. I do not claim to be an authority on anything—except what is good for me to eat.

He also takes me to task concerning my statement that "you cannot be a good stylist if you have no brains" (which I think should be pretty evident!), and says that by making such a statement I implied that, "therefore, if

you have brains you must be a good stylist." Did I? If he says so I suppose I did. But surely he is somewhat hazy about the very special character and kind of the brains we are dealing with. Let me remind him that we are discussing the literary, not the ordinary mind, or any other species of mind. If a man has brains it does not necessarily follow that he is, or should be, a literary man—a statement that cuts both ways!

As for his remark that there is "an art of expression quite apart . . . from the matter waiting to be expressed," I can only assure him that it would afford me the sincerest gratification to see a specimen of it! The only sample that has hitherto come my way was a pamphlet of political import, obviously inspired by a Tory, and entitled "What the Liberals have Done." It consisted of a collection of *blank* leaves, which implied, of course, that the Liberals had done nothing at all! But this is politics, and I must be careful. I am stepping from the frying-pan into the fire.—I am, &c.,

ARTHUR COLES ARMSTRONG.

### Tchaikovsky.

SIR,—With reference to your review of Mrs. Newmarch's *Tchaikovsky*, I should like, with your permission, to emphasise your statement as to his not being "a morbid man." Some of the scandalous stories that have reached England since his death have aroused the suspicion that he was something worse than merely morbid, and the report of his mysterious suicide just at the precise moment when popular success was assured him added colour to this suspicion, and with many people the suspicion became a conviction. I have, however, had the privilege of conversing with several of Tchaikovsky's friends, and I have been assured by them that the great Russian composer could not in any sense be called "morbid"; that he was full of the joy of living; and that, in a limited degree, he was happy and contented. Mr. Adolph Brodsky, who is mentioned with so much affection and regard by Tchaikovsky in his *Diary*, has more than once told me that the story of the latter's suicide is credited by none of his friends and relatives: it is merely an invention of a scandal-loving public, which is only too ready to believe anything that will bring shame and ignominy on the name of an illustrious man.—I am, &c.,

C. FRED KENYON.

### Mr. Robertson's "Introduction to English Politics."

SIR,—Your reviewer, in his partial replies to my queries, says that I dwell on the little questions, but shirk the big ones—an assertion which goes to explain why he refrains from answering what, in all innocence, I considered an important question; but before re-stating that question, I had, perhaps, better deal with the following statement: "In regard to the so-called 'historical shibboleths,' my point was that the analogy of nature is against the author: as different breeds of other animals have their several capacities, so have the breeds of men"—a refutation which leaves me wondering how variability within a closely-related group of animals has been brought about if not by crossing, change of environment, natural or artificial selection, regulation of hot and cold, &c. It thus turns out that this analogy corroborates Mr. Robertson's main thesis: that race genius is a consequence of geographical position, socio-economic conditions, religious and culture contacts. There is, however, no necessity to press this analogy, as our author expressly confines himself to higher societies; and, believing that history is interpretable, he uses the well-accredited histories in order to obtain generalisations which shall give us political and social guidance in the present. My question, then, is: *Into what specific errors has our author been led by his rejection of the race-genius theory?* It is a simple enough question, especially as the material for answering it is given in the book itself.—I am, &c.,

F. KETTLE.



## Our Weekly Competition.

## Result of No. 43 (New Series).

LAST week we offered a prize of One Guinea for the best rendering of the following poem by Alfred de Musset :

## DERNIERS VERS.

J'ai perdu ma force et ma vie,  
Et mes amis, et ma gaieté ;  
J'ai perdu jusqu'à la fierté  
Qui faisait croire à mon génie.  
Quand j'ai connu la vérité,  
J'ai cru que c'était une amie.  
Quand je l'ai comprise et sentie,  
J'en étais déjà dégoûté.  
Et pourtant elle est éternelle,  
Et ceux qui se sont passés d'elle  
Ici bas ont tout ignoré.  
Dieu parle, il faut qu'on lui réponde.  
Le seul bien qui me reste au monde  
Est d'avoir quelquefois pleuré.

This competition has been popular, and many of the translations are good. As usual, some efforts succeed as poems better than they do as translations. We have awarded the prize to Mrs. Alice Ferrand, Littlefield House, Exmouth, for the following :

## LAST VERSES.

My strength is gone, and the glad lust  
Of living fades, and friends depart ;  
Lost even is the pride of heart  
Which made me in my genius trust.  
When first I saw the face of Truth  
I deemed that I had found a friend ;  
But having proved her to the end,  
I satiate grew, and tired, in sooth.  
And yet she is eternal power,  
Nor have they lived a single hour  
Who here below have scorned her sway.  
God speaks, and I must answer soon.  
The world contains but this last boon—  
That I have wept upon a day !

The following translations are among the best sent in :

## A LAST WORD.

My strength and life are gone from me,  
My friends estranged, and mirth forgot ;  
The very pride men held to be  
My pledge of power, remembered not.  
I looked on Truth, and knew her fair  
Of face, and gave her all my trust :  
I probed her inmost heart, and there  
My rapture sickened to disgust.  
Yet has she life that cannot die ;  
Nor is there any secret known  
To souls who pass her heedless by.  
God calls, and man must speak : the years,  
Ruthless, have left me this alone—  
That I, for speech, have given Him tears.

[M. A. W., London.]

## LAST LINES.

My life, my powers, abandon me,  
My friends, my gaiety are fled ;  
Even the pride on which was fed  
My self-belief has ceased to be.  
When first truth came to me I said :  
Lo ! she will prove a friend to me ;  
But when I felt her, and could see—  
Already I was surfeited.  
Yet truth is endless ; whose'er  
Rejected her, missed everywhere  
The lore that is in nature hid.  
God speaks, and I must make reply.  
The sole good left me is that I  
Remember tears which once I shed.

[L. L., London.]

## LAST WORDS.

Energy gone and life beside,  
With friendship, and the youthful glow  
Of joyousness—and power to show  
My genius justified of pride.

For when I looked Truth in the face,  
Methought a friend and comrade found,  
Till Knowledge brought the bitter wound  
Of disenchantment in her place.

Yet Truth stands rooted fast on high,  
And scoffers who have passed her by  
From them, through time, is wisdom kept.

God speaks, and wills an answering sign.  
The only blessing left of mine  
Is this, that I have sometimes wept.

[A. H. W., Croydon.]

## LAST VERSES.

I have lost strength and life's desire,  
And my friends, and gaiety ;  
That pride itself was fain to die  
Which lit by faith my sacred fire.

When I met Truth upon the way,  
I thought that she would be my friend,  
But ere I knew and felt the end,  
I had wearied of her sway.

Natheless she lives immortally,  
And they who heedless pass her by  
Here below have lived inept.

God speaks, we needs must make reply,  
The only blessing I desery  
Is, that I have sometimes wept.

[M. T., London.]

Other replies received from : N. L., Bristol ; R. F. McC., Whitby ; H. V. H., London ; E. W. H., London ; N. S., London ; W. G. F., Southsea ; H. R. S., Newcastle-on-Tyne ; J. D. A., Ealing ; F. R. M., London ; F. H. S., Bridgwater ; J. P., Trowbridge ; C. L. C., Redhill ; H. W. D., London ; W. C. T., Liverpool ; G. E. P., London ; G. H., Malvern Wells ; K. E. T., London ; A. M. P., Folkestone ; E. B., Liverpool ; S. M., Addiscombe ; E. C. M. D., Crediton ; Miss B., Brentwood ; C. J. F., Gloucester ; A. W., London ; K. K., Dublin ; A. B., Edinburgh ; C. J. W., Bristol ; Miss P., Norwich ; A. R. P., Folkestone ; F. W. C., London ; E. A. S., Sevenoaks ; Miss B., Bideford ; N. A., West Bromich ; F. B. D., Torquay ; K. J., Bristol ; J. P. B., Lossiemouth, N.B.

## Competition No. 44 (New Series).

We offer a prize of One Guinea for the best sonnet entitled "China."

## RULES.

Answers, addressed "Literary Competition, THE ACADEMY, 43, Chancery-lane, W.C.," must reach us not later than the first post of Tuesday, July 24. Each answer must be accompanied by the coupon to be found on the second page of Wrapper, or it cannot enter into competition. Competitors sending more than one attempt at solution must accompany each attempt with a separate coupon ; otherwise the first only will be considered. We cannot consider anonymous answers.

## New Books Received.

[These notes on some of the New Books of the week are preliminary to Reviews that may follow.]

## THEOLOGICAL AND BIBLICAL.

"Truth-Seeker," Religion and Reason .....(Watts & Co.) net 1/6

## HISTORY AND BIOGRAPHY.

Bell (F. W.), The South African Conspiracy, or the Arms of Afrikanerdom (Heinemann)

Geden (Alfred S.), Studies in Eastern Religions .....(Kelly)

Rowell (T.), Natal and the Borders .....(Dent) net 2/6

Penny (Mrs. Frank), Fort St. George, Madras .....(Sonne schien) net 10/6

## TRAVEL AND TOPOGRAPHY.

Inglis (H. R. G.), The John o' Groats Road Map .....(Gall & Inglis) 1/0

## POETRY, CRITICISM, AND BELLES LETTRES.

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